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POEMS

EDWARD DOWDEN



POEMS

BY

EDWARD DOWDEN



MCMXIV. J. M. DENT & SONS LTD.
LONDON AND TORONTO

INDEX
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 1914

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PREFACE

GOETHE says in a little poem * that " Poems are stained glass windows "—" *Gedichte sind gemalte Fensterscheiben* "—to be seen aright not from the " market-place " but only from the interior of the church, " *die heilige Kapelle* ": and that " *der Herr Philister* " (equivalent for " indolent Reviewer ") glances at them from without and gets out of temper because he finds them unintelligible from his " market-place " standpoint. This comparison is a pretty conceit, and holds good as a half truth—but not more than a half: for while the artist who paints his " church windows " needs only to make them beautiful from within, the maker of poems must so shape and colour his work that its outer side—the technical, towards the " market-place " of the public—shall have no lack of beauty, though differing from the beauty visible from the spiritual interior.

The old volume of *Edward Dowden's Poems* of 1876, which is now reprinted with additions, has

* " Sechzehn Parabeln," *Gedichte*, Leoper's edition (p. 180) of Goethe's *Gedichte*.

been, to a limited extent, long before the public—seen from the “market-place” by general critics, who, for the most part, approved the outer side of the “painted windows,” and seen perhaps from within by some few like-minded readers, who, though no definite door was opened into “*die heilige Kapelle*,” somehow entered in.

But a great many people, to whom the author’s prose works are well known, have never even heard that he had written poetry. This is due in a measure to the fact that the published book of poems only got into circulation by its first small edition. Its second edition found a silent apotheosis in flame at a great fire at the publisher’s in London, in which nearly the whole of it perished.

Edward Dowden’s chief work has been as a prose writer. That fact remains—yet it is accidental rather than essential. In the early seventies he felt the urge very strongly towards making verse his vocation in life, and he probably would have yielded to it, but for the necessity to be bread-winner for a much-loved household. Poetry is a ware of small commercial value, as most poets—at least for a long space of their lives—have known, and prose, for even a young writer of promise, held out prospects of bread for immediate eating. Hence to prose he turned, and on that road went his way, and whether the accidental

circumstances that determined his course at the parting of the ways wrought loss or gain for our literature, who can say?

But he never wholly abandoned verse, and all through his life, even to the very end, he would fitfully, from time to time, utter in it a part of himself which never found complete issue in prose and which was his most real self.

Perhaps the nearest approaches to his utterance in poetry occurred sometimes in his College lecturing, when in the midst of a written discourse he would interrupt it and stop and liberate his heart in a little rush of words—out of the depths, accompanied by that familiar gesture of his hands which always came to him when emotionally stirred in speaking. Some of his students have told me that they usually found those little extempore bits in a lecture by far the most illuminated and inspiring parts of it, especially as it was then that his voice, always musical in no common degree, vibrated, and acquired a richer tone.

In his prose writings in general he seemed to curb and restrain himself. That he did so was by no means an evil, for the habitual retinence in his style gave to the little rare outbreaks of emotion the quality of charm that we find in a tender flower growing out of a solid stone wall unexpectedly.

Not infrequently a sort of hard irony was em-

ployed by him, as restraint on enthusiasm, with occasional loosening of the curb.

In Edward Dowden's soul there seemed to be capacities which might, under other circumstances, have made him more than a minor poet. His was a more than usually rich, sensuous nature. This, combined with absolute purity—the purity not of ice and snow, but of fire. And, superadded, was an unlimited capacity for sternness—that quality which, as salt, acts as preservative of all human ardours. He came from his Maker, fashioned out of the stuff whereof are made saints, patriots, martyrs, and the great lovers in the world. His work as a scholar never obliterated anything of this in him. By this, his erudition gained richness—the richness of vital blood. It was as no anæmic recluse that he dwelt amongst his book-shelves, and hence no Faust-like weariness of intellectual satiety ever came to him, no sense of being “*beschränkt mit diesem Bücherhauf*” in his surroundings of his library (which latterly had grown to some twenty-four thousand volumes). He lived in company with these in a twofold way, keenly and accurately grasping all their textual details, and at the same time valuing them for the sake, chiefly, of spiritual converse with the writers.

Besides the spiritual converse he gained thus,

he found, as a book-lover, a fertile source of recreation in the collecting of literary rarities, old books, MSS. and curiosities. In this he felt the keen zest of a sportsman. This was his shooting on the moors, his fishing in the rivers. No living creature ever lost its life for his amusement, but in this innocuous play he found unfailing pleasure, and many a piece of luck he had with his gun or rod in hitting some rare bird, or landing some big prize of a fish out of old booksellers' catalogues or the "carts" in the back streets.

His physical nature was fully and strongly developed, and it is out of strong physical instincts that strong spiritual instincts often grow—the boundary line between them being undefined.

His one athletic exercise—swimming—was to him a joy of no common sort. He gave himself to the sea with an eagerness of body, soul and spirit, breasting the bright waters exultingly on many a summer's day on some West of Ireland or Cornish shore, revelling in the sea's life and in his own.

And akin to that, in the sensuous, spiritual region of the soul, was his feeling for all External Nature, his deep delight in the coming of each new Spring—its blackthorn blossoms, its hazel and willow catkins, its daffodils—and his response, as the year went on in its procession, to the glory of the furze and heather glow and to all Earth's sounds and silences.

And of a like sort was his enjoyment of music which had the depth of a passion.

Very possibly, if his lot had been cast in early Christian or mediæval times, all these impulses towards the joy and beauty of the earth might have been sternly crushed out by the moral forces of his character.

Looking at a picture of St Jerome one day—not unlike E. D. in feature—I said to him, “There’s what *you* would have been if you had lived in those times.” (The saint is depicted there as lean, emaciated and woefully dirty!).

It was well for Edward Dowden that he was laid hold of in his early life by that great non-ascetic soul, William Wordsworth. He was initiated into the inner secret of Wordsworth. He had experience of the Wordsworthian ecstasy—that ecstasy which comes, if at all, straight as a gift from God, and is not to be taught by the teaching of the scribes.

Through kinship a man who is born potentially a poet comes first into relation with poets, and with E. Dowden’s sensuousness of capacities it was natural that he should be in his early years attracted to Keats, to the long, deep, rich dwelling of his verse on the vision and the sounds of Nature. It was not until he had advanced some way towards middle life that he came into vital contact with Shelley. He had felt aloof from him; but

the attraction, when once owned, became very powerful, and he yielded to the delight of the swift motion of the Shelleyan utterances.

He always recognized Robert Browning's greatness profoundly, and responded to all his best truths, especially as regards the relation, in love, of Man and Woman, but he never became pledged to an all-round Browning worship; his admiration had no discipleship in it.

For Walt Whitman, with whom a personal friendship, strong on both sides, was formed, he felt the cordial reverence due to the giver of what he reckoned as a gift of immense value. While condemning whatever was unreticent in *Leaves of Grass*, he at the same time saw there the great flood of spirituality available as a force for emancipation of our hearts from pressure of sordidnesses in the world.

It is somewhat remarkable that with all his trend towards the great spiritual and mystical forces in literature he was all along never without a keen appreciation of the writers who brought mundane shrewdness and wisdom. The first book he bought for himself in childhood with the hoarded savings of his pocket-money was *Bacon's Essays*, with which as a small boy he became very familiar. And all through his life he sought with unfailing pleasure the companionship of Jane Austen again and again. And amongst the books which he

himself made, it was perhaps his *Montaigne* that gave him, in the process of making, the delicatest satisfaction—the satisfaction of witnessing and analysing the dexterous play of human intellect and character on low levels.

His attraction to Goethe—very dominant with him in middle life—came, I imagine, from the fact that he saw in that mightiest of the Teutons two diverse qualities in operation—the measureless intellectual spirituality and the vast common-sense of mundane wisdom.

In this attraction there was also the element of the magnetism which draws together opposites—not less forcible than the attraction between affinities.

As regards the moral nature, his own was as far as the North Pole is from the South from that of the great sage of Weimar, whose serenely-wise beneficence contained no potentialities of saint-hood, martyrdom or absolute human love. He sought gain from Goethe just *because* of that unlikeness to what was in himself.

At one period of his literary work he was intending to make as his "*opus magnus*" a full study of Goethe's life and works, and with that intent he carried on a course of reading, and laid in a great equipment of workman's tools—Goethe books in German, French and English. From this project he was turned aside by a call to write

the life of Shelley—a long and difficult task. But he never lost sight of Goethe. In one of the later years of his life, as recreation in a summer's holiday in Cornwall, he translated the whole of the "West-Eastern Divan" into English verse, and previously, from time to time, isolated essays on Goethe themes appeared amongst his prose writings. And yet it is not unlikely that even if the task of Shelley's biography had not intervened, no complete study, such as he had at first planned, might have been ever accomplished by him on Goethe, for with experience there came to him a growing conviction that his best work in criticism could only be done in dealing with what was written in his mother-tongue.

Some of Edward Dowden's friends, Nationalist and Unionist both, have felt regret that he, the gentle scholar, gave such large share of his energies to the strife of politics, as if force were subtracted thereby from his work in Literature. They are mistaken. The output of energy thus given came back to the giver, reinforcing his prose writing with a mundane vigour and virility, exceeding what it might have had if he had kept himself aloof from the affairs of the nation.

Yet, strangely enough, between his politics and his poetry there was a water-tight wall of separation. Other men, to take scattered instances, Kipling, Wordsworth, Milton, fused in various

ways their political feeling and their poetical. This Edward Dowden never attempted. I cannot analyse the "why."

Confining myself to some points which seem left out of sight in most of the admirably appreciative obituary notices in last April's newspapers, I have tried to say here, in a fragmentary way, a few things about a man of whom many things—infinitely many—might be said without exhausting the total. He was himself at the same time many and one. He had multiform aspects—interests very diverse—and yet life was for him in no wise "patchy and scrappy," but had unity throughout.

In Shakespeare, whose faithful scholar he was, there are diversities: and yet, do we not image Shakespeare to our minds as one and a whole?

In the volumes now issued by Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons is contained all the verse that the author left available for publication, with the exception of a sequence of a hundred and one lyrics (which by desire is separately published under the somewhat transparent disguise of editorship). That little sequence, named *A Woman's Reliquary*, is his latest work in verse. Much in it re-echoes sounds that can be heard in his old poems of the early seventies.

E. D. D.

September 1913.

THE WANDERER

I CAST my anchor nowhere (the waves whirled
My anchor from me); East and West are one
To me; against no winds are my sails furled;
—Merely my planet anchors to the Sun.

THE FOUNTAIN

THE FOUNTAIN

(AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SONNETS)

HUSH, let the fountain murmur dim
Melodious secrets; stir no limb,
But lie along the marge and wait,
Till deep and pregnant as with fate,
Fine as a star-beam, crystal-clear,
Each ripple grows upon the ear.
This is that fountain seldom seen
By mortal wanderer,—Hippocrene,—
Where the virgins three times three,
Thy singing brood, Mnemosyne,
Loosen'd the girdle, and with grave
Pure joy their faultless bodies gave
To sacred pleasure of the wave.
Listen! the lapsing waters tell
The urgency uncontrollable
Which makes the trouble of their breast,
And bears them onward with no rest
To ampler skies and some grey plain
Sad with the tumbling of the main.
But see, a sidelong eddy slips
Back into the soft eclipse
Of day, while careless fate allows,
Darkling beneath still olive boughs;
Then with chuckle liquid sweet

Coils within its shy retreat;
This is mine, no wave of might,
But pure and live with glimmering light;
I dare not follow that broad flood
Of Poesy, whose lustihood
Nourishes mighty lands, and makes
Resounding music for their sakes;
I lie beside the well-head clear
With musing joy, with tender fear,
And choose for half a day to lean
Thus on my elbow where the green
Margin-grass and silver-white
Starry buds, the wind's delight,
Thirsting steer, nor goat-hoof rude
Of the branch-sundering Satyr brood
Has ever pashed; now, now, I stoop,
And in hand-hollow dare to scoop
This scantling from the delicate stream;
It lies as quiet as a dream,
And lustrous in my curvèd hand.
Were it a crime if this were drain'd
By lips which met the noonday blue
Fiery and emptied of its dew?
Crown me with small white marish-flowers!
To the good Dæmon, and the Powers
Of this fair haunt I offer up
In unprofanèd lily-cup
Libations; still remains for me
A bird's drink of clear Poesy;

Yet not as light bird comes and dips
A pert bill, but with reverent lips
I drain this slender trembling tide;
O sweet the coolness at my side,
And, lying back, to slowly pry
For spaces of the upper sky
Radiant 'twixt woven olive leaves;
And, last, while some fair show deceives
The closing eyes, to find a sleep
As full of healing and as deep
As on toil-worn Odysseus lay
Surge-swept to his Ionian bay.

IN THE GALLERIES

I. THE APOLLO BELVEDERE

RADIANCE invincible! Is that the brow
Which gleamed on Python while thy arrow sped?
Are those the lips for Hyacinthus dead
That grieved? Wherefore a God indeed art thou:
For all we toil with ill, and the hours bow
And break us, and at best when we have bled,
And are much marred, perchance propitiated
A little doubtful victory they allow:
We sorrow, and thenceforth the lip retains
A shade, and the eyes shine and wonder less.
O joyous Slayer of evil things! O great
And splendid Victor! God, whom no soil stains
Of passion or doubt, of grief or languidness,
—Even to worship thee I come too late.

II. THE VENUS OF MELOS

GODDESS, or woman nobler than the God,
No eyes a-gaze upon Ægean seas
Shifting and circling past their Cyclades
Saw thee. The Earth, the gracious Earth, was
trod
First by thy feet, while round thee lay her broad
Calm harvests, and great kine, and shadowing
trees,

And flowers like queens, and a full year's increase,
Clusters, ripe berry, and the bursting pod.
So thy victorious fairness, unallied
To bitter things or barren, doth bestow
And not exact; so thou art calm and wise;
Thy large allurementsaves; a man may grow
Like Plutarch's men by standing at thy side,
And walk thenceforward with clear-visioned eyes!

III. ANTINOUS CROWNED AS BACCHUS

(In the British Museum)

Who crowned thy forehead with the ivy wreath
And clustered berries burdening the hair?
Who gave thee godhood, and dim rites? Beware
O beautiful, who breathe'st mortal breath,
Thou delicate flame great gloom environeth!
The gods are free, and drink a stainless air,
And lightly on calm shoulders they upbear
A weight of joy eternal, nor can Death
Cast o'er their sleep the shadow of her shrine.
O thou confessed too mortal by the o'er-fraught
Crowned forehead, must thy drooped eyes ever
 see
The glut of pleasure, those pale lips of thine
Still suck a bitter-sweet satiety,
Thy soul descend through cloudy realms of
 thought?

IV. LEONARDO'S "MONNA LISA"

MAKE thyself known, Sibyl, or let despair
Of knowing thee be absolute; I wait
Hour-long and waste a soul. What word of fate
Hides 'twixt the lips which smile and still forbear?
Secret perfection! Mystery too fair!
Tangle the sense no more lest I should hate
Thy delicate tyranny, the inviolate
Poise of thy folded hands, thy fallen hair.
Nay, nay,—I wrong thee with rough words; still
be
Serene, victorious, inaccessible;
Still smile but speak not; lightest irony
Lurk ever 'neath thine eyelids' shadow; still
O'ertop our knowledge; Sphinx of Italy
Allure us and reject us at thy will!

V. ST LUKE PAINTING THE VIRGIN

(By Van der Weyden)

IT was Luke's will; and she, the mother-maid,
Would not gainsay; to please him pleased her
best;
See, here she sits with dovelike heart at rest
Brooding, and smoothest brow; the babe is laid
On lap and arm, glad for the unarrayed
And swatheless limbs he stretches; lightly pressed
By soft maternal fingers the full breast

Seeks him, while half a sidelong glance is stayed
By her own bosom and half passes down
To reach the boy. Through doors and window-
frame

Bright airs flow in; a river tranquilly
Washes the small, glad Netherlandish town.
Innocent calm! no token here of shame,
A pierced heart, sunless heaven, and Calvary.

ON THE HEIGHTS

HERE are the needs of manhood satisfied!
Sane breath, an amplitude for soul and sense,
The noonday silence of the summer hills,
And this embracing solitude; o'er all
The sky unsearchable, which lays its claim,—
A large redemption not to be annulled,—
Upon the heart; and far below, the sea
Breaking and breaking, smoothly, silently.
What need I any further? Now once more
My arrested life begins, and I am man
Complete with eye, heart, brain, and that within
Which is the centre and the light of being;
O dull! who morning after morning chose
Never to climb these gorse and heather slopes
Cairn-crowned, but last within one seaward nook
Wasted my soul on the ambiguous speech
And slow eye-mesmerism of rolling waves,
Courting oblivion of the heart. True life
That was not which possessed me while I lay
Prone on the perilous edge, mere eye and ear,
Staring upon the bright monotony,
Having let slide all force from me, each thought
Yield to the vision of the gleaming blank,
Each nerve of motion and of sense grow numb,
Till to the bland persuasion of some breeze,

Which played across my forehead and my hair,
The lost volition would efface itself,
And I was mingled wholly in the sound
Of tumbling billow and upjetting surge,
Long reluctance, welter and reflux moan,
And the reverberating tumultuousness
'Mid shelf and hollow and angle black with spray.
Yet under all oblivion there remained
A sense of some frustration, a pale dream
Of Nature mocking man, and drawing down,
As streams draw down the dust of gold, his will,
His thought and passion to enrich herself
The insatiable devourer.

Welcome earth,
 My natural heritage! and this soft turf,
 These rocks which no insidious ocean saps,
 But the wide air flows over, and the sun
 Illumines. Take me, Mother, to thy breast,
 Gather me close in tender, sustinent arms,
 Lay bare thy bosom's sweetness and its strength
 That I may drink vigour and joy and love.
 Oh, infinite composure of the hills!
 Thou large simplicity of this fair world,
 Candour and calmness, with no mockery,
 No soft frustration, flattering sigh or smile
 Which masks a tyrannous purpose; and ye Powers
 Of these sky-circled heights, and Presences
 Awful and strict, I find you favourable,
 Who seek not to exclude me or to slay,

Rather accept my being, take me up
Into your silence and your peace. Therefore
By him whom ye reject not, gracious Ones,
Pure vows are made that haply he will be
Not all unworthy of the world; he casts
Forth from him, never to resume again,
Veiled nameless things, frauds of the unfilled heart,
Fantastic pleasures, delicate sadnesses,
The lurid, and the curious, and the occult,
Coward sleights and shifts, the manners of the
 slave,

And long unnatural uses of dim life.
Hence with you! Robes of angels touch these
 heights
Blown by pure winds and I lay hold upon them.

Here is a perfect bell of purple heath,
Made for the sky to gaze at reverently,
As faultless as itself, and holding light,
Glad air and silence in its slender dome;
Small, but a needful moment in the sum
Of God's full joy—the abyss of ecstasy
O'er which we hang as the bright bow of foam
Above the never-filled receptacle
Hangs seven-hued where the endless cataract
 leaps.

O now I guess why you have summoned me,
Headlands and heights, to your companionship;
Confess that I this day am needful to you!

The heavens were loaded with great light, the
winds

Brought you calm summer from a hundred fields,
All night the stars had pricked you to desire,
The imminent joy at its full season flowered,
There was a consummation, the broad wave
Toppled and fell. And had ye voice for this?
Sufficient song to unburden the urged breast?
A pastoral pipe to play? a lyre to touch?
The brightening glory of the heath and gorse
Could not appease your passion, nor the cry
Of this wild bird that flits from bush to bush.
Me therefore you required, a voice for song,
A pastoral pipe to play, a lyre to touch,
I recognize your bliss to find me here;
The sky at morning when the sun upleaps
Demands her atom of intense melody,
Her point of quivering passion and delight,
And will not let the lark's heart be at ease.
Take me, the brain with various, subtile fold,
The breast that knows swift joy, the vocal lips;
I yield you here the cunning instrument
Between your knees; now let the plectrum fall!

“ LA RÉVÉLATION PAR LE DÉSERT ”

“Toujours le désert se montre à l'horizon, quand vous prononcez
le nom de Jéhovah.”

EDGAR QUINET.

BEYOND the places haunted by the feet
Of thoughts and swift desires, and where the eyes
Of wing'd imaginings are wild, and dreams
Glide by on noiseless plumes, beyond the dim
Veiled sisterhood of ever-circling mists,
Who dip their urns in those enchanted meres
Where all thought fails, and every ardour dies,
And through the vapour dead looms a low moon,
Beyond the fountains of the dawn, beyond
The white home of the morning star, lies spread
A desert lifeless, bright, illimitable,
The world's confine, o'er which no sighing goes
From weary winds of Time.

I sat me down
Upon a red stone flung on the red sand,
In length as great as some sarcophagus
Which holds a king, but scribbled with no runes,
Bald, and unstained by lichen or grey moss.
Save me no living thing in that red land
Showed under heaven; no furtive lizard slipped,
No desert weed pushed upward the tough spine
Or hairy lump, no slow bird was a spot
Of moving black on the deserted air,
Or stationary shrilled his tuneless cry;

No shadow stirr'd, nor luminous haze uprose,
 Quivering against the blanched blue of the marge.
 I sat unbonneted, and my throat baked,
 And my tongue loll'd dogwise. Red sand below,
 And one unliddeed eye above—mere God
 Blazing from marge to marge. I did not pray,
 My heart was as a cinder in my breast,
 And with both hands I held my head which
 throbbed.

I, who had sought for God, had followed God
 Through the fair world which stings with sharp
 desire

For him of whom its hints and whisperings are,
 Its gleams and tingling moments of the night,
 I, who in flower, and wave, and mountain-wind,
 And song of bird, and man's diviner heart
 Had owned the present Deity, yet strove
 For naked access to his inmost shrine,—
 Now found God doubtless, for he filled the heaven
 Like brass, he breathed upon the air like fire.
 But I, a speck 'twixt the strawn sand and sky,
 Being yet an atom of pure and living will,
 And perdurable as any God of brass,
 With all my soul, with all my mind and strength
 Hated this God. O, for a little cloud
 No bigger than a man's hand on the rim,
 To rise with rain and thunder in its womb,
 And blot God out! But no such cloud would come.
 I felt my brain on fire, heard each pulse tick;

It was a God to make a man stark mad;
I rose with neck out-thrust, and nodding head,
While with dry chaps I could not choose but
 laugh;

Ha, ha, ha, ha, across the air it rang,
No sweeter than the barking of a dog,
Hard as the echo from an iron cliff;
It must have buffeted the heaven; I ceased,
I looked to see from the mid sky an arm,
And one sweep of the scimitar; I stood;
And when the minute passed with no event,
No doomsman's stroke, no sundering soul and
 flesh,

When silence dropt its heavy fold on fold,
And God lay yet inert in heaven, or scorn'd
His rebel antic-sized, grotesque,—I swooned.

Now when the sense returned my lips were wet,
And cheeks and chin were wet, with a dank dew,
Acrid and icy, and one shadow huge
Hung over me blue-black, while all around
The fierce light glared. O joy, a living thing,
Emperor of this red domain of sand,
A giant snake! One fold, one massy wreath
Arched over me; a man's expanded arms
Could not embrace the girth of this great lord
In his least part, and low upon the sand
His small head lay, wrinkled, a flaccid bag,
Set with two jewels of green fire, the eyes

That had not slept since making of the world.
 Whence grew I bold to gaze into such eyes?
 Thus gazing each conceived the other's thought,
 Aware how each read each; the Serpent mused,
 " Are all the giants dead, a long time dead,
 Born of the broad-hipped women, grave and tall,
 In whom God's sons poured a celestial seed?
 A long time dead, whose great deeds filled the earth
 With clamour as of beaten shields, all dead,
 And Cush and Canaan, Mizraim and Phut,
 And the boy Nimrod storming through large
 lands
 Like earthquake through tower'd cities, these
 depart,
 And what remains? Behold, the elvish thing
 We raised from out his swoon, this now is man.
 The pretty vermin! helpless to conceive
 Of great, pure, simple sin, and vast revolt;
 The world escapes from deluge these new days,
 We build no Babels with the Shinar slime;
 What would this thin-legged grasshopper with us,
 The Dread Ones? Rather let him skip, and chirp
 Hymns in his smooth grass to his novel God,
 ' The Father ' ; here no bland paternity
 He meets, but visible Might blocks the broad sky,
 My great Co-mate, the Ancient. Hence! avoid!
 What wouldst thou prying on our solitude?
 For thee my sly small cousin may suffice,
 And sly small bites about the heart and groin;

Hence to his haunt! Yet ere thou dost depart
I mark thee with my sign.”

A vibrant tongue
Had in a moment pricked upon my brow
The mystic mark of brotherhood, Cain's brand,
But when I read within his eyes the words
“ Hence ” and “ avoid,” dim horror seized on me,
And rising, with both arms stretched forth, and
head

Bowed earthward, and not turning once I ran;
And what things saw me as I raced by them,
What hands plucked at my dress, what light wings
brushed

My face, what waters in my hearing seethed,
I know not, till I reached familiar lands,
And saw grey clouds slow gathering for the night,
Above sweet fields, whence the June mowers
strolled

Homewards with girls who chatted down the
lane.

Is this the secret lying round the world?
A Dread One watching with unlidded eye
Slow century after century from his heaven,
And that great lord, the worm of the red plain,
Cold in mid sun, strenuous, untameable,
Coiling his solitary strength along
Slow century after century, conscious each
How in the life of his Arch-enemy

He lives, how ruin of one confounds the pair,—
Is this the eternal dual mystery?
One Source of being, Light, or Love, or Lord,
Whose shadow is the brightness of the world,
Still let thy dawns and twilights glimmer pure
In flow perpetual from hill to hill,
Still bathe us in thy tides of day and night;
Wash me at will a weed in thy free wave,
Drenched in the sun and air and surge of Thee.

THE MORNING STAR

I

BACKWARD betwixt the gates of steepest heaven,
Faint from the insupportable advance
Of light confederate in the East, is driven

The starry chivalry, and helm and lance,
Which held keen ward upon the shadowy plain,
Yield to the stress and stern predominance

Of Day; no wanderer morning-moon awane
Floats through dishevelled clouds, exanimate,
In disarray, with gaze of weariest pain;

O thou, sole Splendour, sprung to vindicate
Night's ancient fame, thou in dread strife serene,
With back-blown locks, joyous yet desperate

Flamest; from whose pure ardour Earth doth win
High passionate pangs, thou radiant paladin.

II

NAY; strife must cease in song: far-sent and clear
Piercing the silence of this summer morn
I hear thy swan-song rapturous; I hear

Life's ecstasy; sharp cries of flames which
burn

With palpitating joy, intense and pure,
From altars of the universe, and yearn

In eager spires; and under these the sure
Strong ecstasy of Death, in phrase too deep
For thought, too bright for dim investiture.

Of mortal words, and sinking more than sleep
Down holier places of the soul's delight;
Cry, through the quickening dawn, to us who
creep

'Mid dreams and dews of the dividing night,
Thou searcher of the darkness and the light.

III

I SEEK thee, and thou art not; for the sky
Has drawn thee in upon her breast to be
A hidden talisman, while light soars high,

Virtuous to make wide heaven's tranquillity
More tranquil, and her steadfast truth more true,
Yea even her overbowed infinity.

Of tenderness, when o'er wet woods the blue
Shows past white edges of a sundering cloud,
More infinitely tender. Day is new,

Night ended; how the hills are overflowed
With spaciousness of splendour, and each tree
Is touched; only not yet the lark is loud,

Since viewless still o'er city and plain and sea
Vibrates thy spirit-wingèd ecstasy.

A CHILD'S NOONDAY SLEEP

BECAUSE you sleep, my child, with breathing light
As heave of the June sea,
Because your lips soft petals dewy-bright
Dispart so tenderly;

Because the slumbrous warmth is on your cheek
Up from the hushed heart sent,
And in this midmost noon when winds are weak
No cloud lies more content;

Because nor song of bird, nor lamb's keen call
May reach you sunken deep,
Because your lifted arm I thus let fall
Heavy with perfect sleep;

Because all will is drawn from you, all power,
And Nature through dark roots
Will hold and nourish you for one sweet hour
Amid her flowers and fruits;

Therefore though tempests gather, and the gale
Through autumn skies will roar,
Though Earth send up to heaven the ancient wail
Heard by dead Gods of yore;

Though spectral faiths contend, and for her course
The soul confused must try,
While through the whirl of atoms and of force
Looms an abandoned sky;

Yet, know I, Peace abides, of earth's wild things
Centre, and ruling thence;
Behold, a spirit folds her budded wings
In confident innocence.

IN THE GARDEN

I. THE GARDEN

PAST the town's clamour is a garden full
Of lonesomeness and old greenery; at noon
When birds are hushed, save one dim cushat's
 croon,
A ripen'd silence hangs beneath the cool
Great branches; basking roses dream and drop
A petal, and dream still; and summer's boon
Of mellow grasses, to be levelled soon
By a dew-drenchèd scythe, will hardly stop
At the uprunning mounds of chestnut trees.
Still let me muse in this rich haunt by day,
And know all night in dusky placidness
It lies beneath the summer, while great ease
Broods in the leaves, and every light wind's stress
Lifts a faint odour down the verdurous way.

II. VISIONS

HERE I am slave of visions. When noon heat
Strikes the red walls, and their environ'd air
Lies steep'd in sun; when not a creature dare
Affront the fervour, from my dim retreat
Where woof of leaves embowers a beechen seat,
With chin on palm, and wide-set eyes I stare,
Beyond the liquid quiver and the glare,

Upon fair shapes that move on silent feet.
Those Three strait-robed, and speechless as they
pass,
Come often, touch the lute, nor heed me more
Than birds or shadows heed; that naked child
Is dove-like Psyche slumbering in deep grass;
Sleep, sleep,—he heeds thee not, yon Sylvan wild
Munching the russet apple to its core.

III. AN INTERIOR

THE grass around my limbs is deep and sweet;
Yonder the house has lost its shadow wholly,
The blinds are dropped, and softly now and
slowly
The day flows in and floats; a calm retreat
Of tempered light where fair things fair things
meet;
White busts and marble Dian make it holy,
Within a niche hangs Dürer's Melancholy
Brooding; and, should you enter, there will greet
Your sense with vague allurements effluence faint
Of one magnolia bloom; fair fingers draw
From the piano Chopin's heart-complaint;
Alone, white-robed she sits; a fierce macaw
On the verandah, proud of plume and paint,
Screams, insolent despot, showing beak and
claw.

IV. THE SINGER

“THAT was the thrush’s last good-night,” I
thought,
And heard the soft descent of summer rain
In the drooped garden leaves; but hush! again
The perfect iterance,—freer than unsought
Odours of violets dim in woodland ways,
Deeper than coiled waters laid a-dream
Below mossed ledges of a shadowy stream,
And faultless as blown roses in June days.
Full-throated singer! art thou thus anew
Voiceful to hear how round thyself alone
The enriched silence drops for thy delight
More soft than snow, more sweet than honey-dew?
Now cease: the last faint western streak is gone,
Stir not the blissful quiet of the night.

V. A SUMMER MOON

QUEEN-MOON of this enchanted summer night,
One virgin slave companioning thee,—I lie
Vacant to thy possession as this sky
Conquered and calmed by thy rejoicing might;
Swim down through my heart’s deep, thou dewy
bright
Wanderer of heaven, till thought must faint and
die,

And I am made all thine inseparably,
Resolved into the dream of thy delight.
Ah no! the place is common for her feet,
Not here, not here,—beyond the amber mist,
And breadths of dusky pine, and shining lawn,
And unstirred lake, and gleaming belts of wheat,
She comes upon her Latmos, and has kissed
The sidelong face of blind Endymion.

VI. A PEACH

IF any sense in mortal dust remains
When mine has been refined from flower to
flower,
Won from the sun all colours, drunk the
shower
And delicate winy dews, and gained the gains
Which elves who sleep in airy bells, a-swing
Through half a summer day, for love bestow,
Then in some warm old garden let me grow
To such a perfect, lush, ambrosian thing
As this. Upon a southward-facing wall
I bask, and feel my juices dimly fed
And mellowing, while my bloom comes golden
grey:
Keep the wasps from me! but before I fall
Pluck me, white fingers, and o'er two ripe-red
Girl lips O let me richly swoon away!

VII. EARLY AUTUMN

IF while I sit flatter'd by this warm sun
Death came to me, and kissed my mouth and
 brow,
And eyelids which the warm light hovers through,
I should not count it strange. Being half won
By hours that with a tender sadness run,
Who would not softly lean to lips which woo
In the Earth's grave speech? Nor could it aught
 undo
Of Nature's calm observances begun
Still to be here the idle autumn day.
Pale leaves would circle down, and lie unstirr'd
Where'er they fell; the tired wind hither call
Her gentle fellows; shining beetles stray
Up their green courts; and only yon shy bird
A little bolder grow ere evenfall.

VIII. LATER AUTUMN

THIS is the year's despair: some wind last night
Utter'd too soon the irrevocable word,
And the leaves heard it, and the low clouds heard;
So a wan morning dawned of sterile light;
Flowers drooped, or showed a startled face and
 white;

The cattle cowered, and one disconsolate bird
Chirped a weak note; last came this mist and
 blurred

The hills, and fed upon the fields like blight.
Ah, why so swift despair! There yet will be
Warm noons, the honey'd leavings of the year,
Hours of rich musing, ripest autumn's core,
And late-heaped fruit, and falling hedge-berry,
Blossoms in cottage-crofts, and yet, once more,
A song, not less than June's, fervent and clear.

THE HEROINES

THE HEROINES

HELENA

(Tenth year of Troy-Siege)

SHE stood upon the wall of windy Troy,
And lifted high both arms, and cried aloud
With no man near:—

“ Troy-town and glory of Greece
Strive, let the flame aspire, and pride of life
Glow to white heat! Great lords be strong,
rejoice,

Lament, know victory, know defeat—then die;
Fair is the living many-coloured play
Of hates and loves, and fair it is to cease,
To cease from these and all Earth's comely things.
I, Helena, impatient of a couch
Dim-scented, and dark eyes my face had fed,
And soft captivity of circling arms,
Come forth to shed my spirit on you, a wind
And sunlight of commingling life and death.
City and tented plain behold who stands
Betwixt you! Seems she worth a play of swords,
And glad expense of rival hopes and hates?
Have the Gods given a prize which may content,
Who set your games afoot,—no fictile vase,
But a sufficient goblet of great gold,
Embossed with heroes, filled with perfumed wine?

How! doubt ye? Thus I draw the robe aside
And bare the breasts of Helen.

Yesterday

A mortal maiden I beheld, the light
Tender within her eyes, laying white arms
Around her sire's mailed breast, and heard her
chide

Because his cheek was blood-splashed,—I beheld
And did not wish me her. O, not for this
A God's blood thronged within my mother's
veins!

For no such tender purpose rose the swan
With ruffled plumes, and hissing in his joy
Flashed up the stream, and held with heavy
wings

Leda, and curved the neck to reach her lips,
And stayed, nor left her lightly. It is well
To have quickened into glory one supreme,
Swift hour, the century's fiery-hearted bloom,
Which falls,—to stand a splendour paramount,
A beacon of high hearts and fates of men,
A flame blown round by clear, contending winds,
Which gladden in the contest and wax strong.
Cities of Greece, fair islands, and Troy town,
Accept a woman's service; these my hands
Hold not the distaff, ply not at the loom;
I store from year to year no well-wrought web
For daughter's dowry; wide the web I make,
Fine-tissued, costly as the Gods desire,

Shot with a gleaming woof of lives and deaths,
Inwrought with colours flowerlike, piteous, strange.
Oblivion yields before me: ye winged years
Which make escape from darkness, the red light
Of a wild dawn upon your plumes, I stand
The mother of the stars and winds of heaven,
Your eastern Eos; cry across the storm!
Through me man's heart grows wider; little town
Asleep in silent sunshine and smooth air,
While babe grew man beneath your girdling
towers,
Wake, wonder, lift the eager head alert,
Snake-like, and swift to strike, while altar-flame
Rises for plighted faith with neighbour town
That slept upon the mountain-shelf, and showed
A small white temple in the morning sun.
Oh, ever one way tending you keen prow
Which shear the shadowy waves when stars are
faint
And break with emulous cries unto the dawn,
I gaze and draw you onward; splendid names
Lurk in you, and high deeds, and unachieved
Virtues, and house-o'erwhelming crimes, while life
Leaps in sharp flame ere all be ashes grey.
Thus have I willed it ever since the hour
When that great lord, the one man worshipful,
Whose hands had haled the fierce Hippolyta
Lightly from out her throng of martial maids,
Would grace his triumph, strengthen his large joy

With splendour of the swan-begotten child,
Nor asked a ten years' siege to make acquist
Of all her virgin store. No dream that was,—
The moonlight in the woods, our singing stream,
Eurotas, the sleek panther at my feet,
And on my heart a hero's strong right hand.
O draught of love immortal! Dastard world
Too poor for great exchange of soul, too poor
For equal lives made glorious! O too poor
For Theseus and for Helena!

Yet now
It yields once more a brightness, if no love;
Around me flash the tides, and in my ears
A dangerous melody and piercing-clear
Sing the twin siren-sisters, Death and Life;
I rise and gird my spirit for the close.

Last night Cassandra cried 'Ruin, ruin, and ruin!'
I mocked her not, nor disbelieved; the gloom
Gathers, and twilight takes the unwary world.
Hold me, ye Gods, a torch across the night,
With one long flare blown back o'er tower and town,
Till the last things of Troy complete themselves:
—Then blackness, and the grey dust of a heart."

ATALANTA

"MILANION, seven years ago this day
You overcame me by a golden fraud,

Traitor, and see I crown your cup with flowers,
With violets and white sorrel from dim haunts,—
A fair libation—ask you to what God?
To Artemis, to Artemis my Queen.

Not by my will did you escape the spear
Though piteous I might be for your glad life,
Husband, and for your foolish love: the Gods
Who heard your vows had care of you: I stooped
Half toward the beauty of the shining thing
Through some blind motion of an instant joy,—
As when our babe reached arms to pluck the moon
A great, round fruit between dark apple-boughs,—
And half, marking your wile, to fling away
Needless advantage, conquer carelessly,
And pass the goal with one light finger-touch
Just while you leaned forth the bent body's
length

To reach it. Could I guess I strove with three,
With Aphrodite, Eros, and the third—
Milanion? There upon the maple-post
Your right hand rested: the event had sprung
Complete from darkness, and possessed the world
Ere yet conceived: upon the edge of doom
I stood with foot arrested and blind heart,
Aware of nought save some unmastered fate
And reddening neck and brow. I heard you cry
' Judgment, both umpires!' saw you stand erect,
Panting, and with a face so glad, so great

It shone through all my dull bewilderment
A beautiful uncomprehended joy,
One perfect thing and bright in a strange world.
But when I looked to see my father shamed,
A-choke with rage and words of proper scorn,
He nodded, and the beard upon his breast
Pulled twice or thrice, well-pleased, and laughed
aloud,

And while the wrinkles gathered round his eyes
Cried ' Girl, well done! My brother's son retain
Shrewd head upon your shoulders! Maidens ho!
A veil for Atalanta, and a zone
Male fingers may unclasp! Lead home the bride,
Prepare the nuptial chamber! ' At his word
My life turned round: too great the shame had
grown

With all men leagued to mock me. Could I stay,
Confront the vulgar gladness of the world
At high emprise defeated, a free life
Tethered, light dimmed, a virtue singular
Subdued to ways of common use and wont?
Must I become the men's familiar jest,
The comment of the matron-guild? I turned,
I sought the woods, sought silence, solitude,
Green depths divine, where the soft-footed ounce
Lurks, and the light deer comes and drinks and
goes,

Familiar paths in which the mind might gain
Footing, and haply from a vantage-ground

Drive this new fate an arm's-length, hand's-
breadth off
A little while, till certitude of sight
And strength returned.

At evening I went back,
Walked past the idle groups at gossipry,
Sought you, and laid my hand upon your wrist,
Drew you apart, and with no shaken voice
Spoke, while the swift, hard strokes my heart out-
beat
Seemed growing audible, ' Milanion,
I am your wife for freedom and fair deeds:
Choose: am I such an one a man could love?
What need you? Some soft song to soothe your
life,
Or a clear cry at daybreak? ' And I ceased.
How deemed you that first moment? That the
Gods
Had changed my heart? That I since morn had
grown
Haunter of Aphrodite's golden shrine,
Had kneeled before the victress, vowed my vow,
Besought her pardon, ' Aphrodite, grace!
Accept the rueful Atalanta's gifts,
Rose wreaths and snow-white doves '?

In the dim woods
There is a sacred place, a solitude

Within their solitude, a heart of strength
Within their strength. The rocks are heaped
around

A goblet of great waters ever fed
By one swift stream which flings itself in air
With all the madness, mirth and melody
Of twenty rivulets gathered in the hills
Where might escapes in gladness. Here the trees
Strike deeper roots into the heart of earth,
And hold more high communion with the heavens;
Here in the hush of noon the silence broods
More full of vague divinity; the light
Slow-changing and the shadows as they shift
Seem characters of some inscrutable law,
And one who lingers long will almost hope
The secret of the world may be surprised
Ere he depart. It is a haunt beloved
Of Artemis, the echoing rocks have heard
Her laughter and her lore, and the brown stream
Flashed, smitten by the splendour of her limbs.
Hither I came; here turned, and dared confront
Pursuing thoughts; here held my life at gaze,
If ruined at least to clear loose wrack away,
Study its lines of bare dismantlement,
And shape a strict despair. With fixed hard lips,
Dry-eyed, I set my face against the stream
To deal with fate; the play of woven light
Gleaming and glancing on the rippled flood
Grew to a tyranny; and one visioned face

Would glide into the circle of my sight,
Would glide and pass away, so glad, so great
The imminent joy it brought seemed charged with
fear.

I rose, and paced from trunk to trunk, brief track
This way and that; at least my will maintained
Her law upon my limbs; they needs must turn
At the appointed limit. A keen cry
Rose from my heart—' Toils of the world grow
strong,

' Yield strength, yield strength to rend them to
my hands;

' Be thou apparent, Queen! in dubious ways

' Lo my feet fail; cry down the forest glade,

' Pierce with thy voice the tangle and dark boughs,

' Call, and I follow thee.'

What things made up
Memorial for the Presence of the place
Thenceforth to hold? Only the torrent's leap
Endlessly vibrating, monotonous rhythm
Of the swift footstep pacing to and fro,
Only a soul's reiterated cry
Under the calm, controlling, ancient trees,
And tutelary ward and watch of heaven
Felt through steep inlets which the upper airs
Blew wider.

On the grass at last I lay
Seized by a peace divine, I know not how;

Passive, yet never so possessed of power,
Strong, yet content to feel not use my strength
Sustained a babe upon the breasts of life
Yet armed with adult will, a shining spear.
O strong deliverance of the larger law
Which strove not with the less! impetuous youth
Caught up in ampler force of womanhood!
Co-operant ardours of joined lives! the calls
Of heart to heart in chase of strenuous deeds!
Virgin and wedded freedom not disjoined,
And loyal married service to my Queen!

Husband, have lesser gains these seven good years
Been yours because you chose no gracious maid
Whose hands had woven in the women's room
Many fair garments, while her dreaming heart
Had prescience of the bridal; one whose claims,
Tender exactions feminine, had pleased
Fond husband, one whose gentle gifts had pleased,
Soft playful touches, little amorous words,
Untutored thoughts that widened up toward yours,
With trustful homage of uplifted eyes,
And sweetest sorrows lightly comforted?
Have we two challenged each the other's heart
Too highly? Have our joys been all too large,
No gleaming gems on finger or on neck
A man may turn and touch caressingly,
But ampler than this heaven we stand beneath—
Wide wings of Presences august? Our lives,

Were it not better they had stood apart
A little space, letting the sweet sense grow
Of distance bridged by love? Had that full
calm,—

I may not question since you call it true,—
Found in some rightness of a woman's will,
Been gladder through perturbing touch of doubt,
By brief unrest made exquisitely aware
Of all its dear possession? Have our eyes
Met with too calm directness—soul to soul
Turned with the unerroneous long regard,
Until no stuff remains for dreams to weave,
Nought but unmeasured faithfulness, clear depths
Pierced by the sun, and yielding to the eye
Which searches, yet not fathoms? Did my lips
Lay on your lips too great a pledge of love
With awe too rapturous? Teach me how I fail,
Recount what things your life has missed through
me,

Appease me with new needs; my strength is weak
Trembling toward perfect service."

In her eyes
Tears stood and utterance ceased. Wondering the
boy
Parthenopœus stopped his play and gazed.

EUROPA

“ HE stood with head erect fronting the herd;
At the first sight of him I knew the God
And had no fear. The grass is sweet and long
Up the east land backed by a pale blue heaven:
Grey, shining gravel shelves toward the sea
Which sang and sparkled; between these he stood,
Beautiful, with imperious head, firm foot,
And eyes resolved on present victory,
Which swerved not from the full acquist of joy,
Calmly triumphant. Did I see at all
The creamy hide, deep dewlap, little horns,
Or hear the girls describe them? I beheld
Zeus, and the law of my completed life.
Therefore the ravishment of some great calm
Possessed me, and I could not basely start
Or scream; if there was terror in my breast
It was to see the inevitable bliss
In prone descent from heaven; apart I lived
Held in some solitude, intense and clear,
Even while amid the frolic girls I stooped
And praised the flowers we gathered, they and I,
Pink-streaked convolvulus the warm sand bears,
Orchids, dark poppies with the crumpled leaf,
And reeds and giant rushes from a pond
Where the blue dragon-fly shimmers and shifts.
All these were notes of music, harmonies
Fashioned to underlie a resonant song,

Which sang how no more days of flower-culling
Little Europa must desire; henceforth
The large needs of the world resumed her life,
So her least joy must be no trivial thing,
But ordered as the motion of the stars,
Or grand incline of sun-flower to the sun.

By this the God was near; my soul waxed strong,
And wider orb'd the vision of the world
As fate drew nigh. He stooped, all gentleness,
Inviting touches of the tender hands,
And wore the wreaths they twisted round his horns
In lordly-playful wise, me all this while
Summoning by great mandates at my heart,
Which silenced every less authentic call,
Away, away, from girlhood, home, sweet friends,
The daily dictates of my mother's will,
Agenor's cherishing hand, and all the ways
Of the calm household. I would fain have felt
Some ruth to part from these, the tender ties
Severing with thrills of passion. Can I blame
My heart for light surrender of things dear,
And hardness of a little selfish soul?
Nay: the decree of joy was over me,
There was the altar, I, the sacrifice
Foredoomed to life, not death; the victim bound
Looked for the stroke, the world's one fact for her,
The blissful consummation: straight to this
Her course had tended from the hour of birth.

Even till this careless morn of maidenhood
A sudden splendour changed to life's high noon:
For this my mother taught me gracious things,
My father's thoughts had dealt with me, for this
The least flower blossomed, the least cloud went by,
All things conspired for this; the glad event
Summed my full past and held it, as the fruit
Holds the fair sequence of the bud and flower
In soft matureness.

Now he bent the knee;
I never doubted of my part to do,
Nor lingered idly, since to veil command
In tender invitation pleased my lord;
I sat, and round his neck one arm I laid
Beyond all chance secure. Whether my weight
Or the soft pressure of the encircling arm
Quickened in him some unexpected bliss
I know not, but his flight was one steep rush.
O uncontrollable and joyous rage!
O splendour of the multitudinous sea!
Swift foam about my feet, the eager stroke
Of the strong swimmer, new sea-creatures brave,
And uproar of blown conch, and shouting lips
Under the open heaven; till Crete rose fair
With steadfast shining peak, and promontories.

Shed not a leaf, O plane-tree, not a leaf,
Let sacred shadow, and slumbrous sound remain
Alway, where Zeus looked down upon his bride."

ANDROMEDA

“ THIS is my joy—that when my soul had wrought
Her single victory over fate and fear,
He came, who was deliverance. At the first,
Though the rough-bearded fellows bruised my
wrists

Holding them backwards while they drove the
bolts,

And stared around my body, workman-like,
I did not argue nor bewail; but when
The flash and dip of equal oars had passed,
And I was left a thing for sky and sea
To encircle, gaze on, wonder at, not save—
The clear resolve which I had grasped and held,
Slipped as a dew-drop slips from some flower-cup
O’erweighted, and I longed to cry aloud
One sharp, great cry, and scatter the fixed will,
In fond self-pity. Have you watched night-long,
Above a face from which the life recedes,
And seen death-set his seal before the dawn?
You do not shriek and clasp the hands, but just
When morning finds the world once more all good
And ready for wave’s leap and swallow’s flight,
There comes a drift from undiscovered flowers,
A drone of sailing bee, a dance of light
Among the awakened leaves, a touch, a tang,
A nameless nothing, and the world turns round,
And the full soul runs over, and tears flow,

And it is seen a piteous thing to die.
So fared it there with me; the ripple ran
Crisp to my feet; the tufted sea-pink bloomed
From a cleft rock, I saw the insects drop
From blossom into blossom; and the wide
Intolerable splendour of the sea,
Calm in a liquid hush of summer morn,
Girdled me, and no cloud relieved the sky.
I had refused to drink the proffered wine
Before they bound me, and my strength was less
Than needful: yet the cry escaped not, yet
My purpose had not fallen abroad in ruin;
Only the perfect knowledge I had won
Of things which fate decreed deserted me,
The vision I had held of life and death
Was blurred by some vague mist of piteousness,
Nor could I lean upon a steadfast will.
Therefore I closed both eyes resolved to search
Backwards across the abysm, and find Death
there,
And hold him with my hand, and scan his face
By my own choice, and read his strict intent
On lip and brow,—not hunted to his feet
And cowering slavewise; ‘Death,’ I whispered,
‘Death,’
Calling him whom I needed: and he came.

Wherefore record the travail of the soul
Through darkness to grey light, the cloudy war,

The austere calm, the bitter victory?
It seemed that I had mastered fate, and held,
Still with shut eyes, the passion of my heart
Compressed, and cast the election of my will
Into that scale made heavy with the woe
Of all the world, and fair relinquished lives.
Suddenly the broad sea was vibrated,
And the air shaken with confused noise
Not like the steadfast splash and creak of oars,
And higher on my foot the ripple slid.
The monster was abroad beneath the sun.
This therefore was the moment—could my soul
Sustain her trial? And the soul replied
A swift, sure ‘Yes’: yet must I look forth once,
Confront my anguish, nor drop blindly down
From horror into horror: and I looked—
O thou deliverance, thou bright victory
I saw thee, and was saved! The middle air
Was cleft by thy impatience of revenge,
Thy zeal to render freedom to things bound:
The conquest sitting on thy brow, the joy
Of thy unerring flight became to me
Nowise mere hope, but full enfranchisement.
A sculptor of the isles has carved the deed
Upon a temple’s frieze; the maiden chained
Lifts one free arm across her eyes to hide
The terror of the moment, and her head
Sideways averted writhes the slender neck:
While with a careless grace in flying curve,

And glad like Hermes in his aery poise,
Toward the gaping throat a youth extends
The sword held lightly. When to sacrifice
I pass at morn with my tall Sthenelos,
I smile, but do not speak. No! when my gaze
First met him I was saved; because the world
Could hold so brave a creature I was free:
Here one had come with not my father's eyes
Which darkened to the clamour of the crowd,
And gave a grieved assent; not with the eyes
Of anguish-stricken Cassiopeia, dry
And staring as I passed her to the boat.
Was not the beauty of his strength and youth
Warrant for many good things in the world
Which could not be so poor while nourishing him?
What faithlessness of heart could countervail
The witness of that brow? What dastard chains?
Did he not testify of sovereign powers
O'ermatching evil, awful charities
Which save and slay, the terror of clear joy,
Unquenchable intolerance of ill,
Order subduing chaos, beauty pledged
To conquest of all foul deformities?
And was there need to turn my head aside,
I, who had one sole thing to do, no more,
To watch the deed? I know the careless grace
My Perseus wears in manage of the steed,
Or shooting the swift disc: not such the mode
Of that victorious moment of descent

When the large tranquil might his soul contains
Was gathered for a swift abolishment
Of proud brute-tyranny. He seemed in air
A shining spear which hisses in its speed
And smites through boss and breastplate. Did
he see

Andromeda, who never glanced at her
But set his face against the evil thing?
I know not; yet one truth I may not doubt
How ere the wallowing monster blind and
vast

Turned a white belly to the sun, he stood
Beside me with some word of comfort strong
Nourishing the heart like choral harmonies.
O this was then my joy, that I could give
A soul not saved from wretched female fright,
Or anarchy of self-abandoned will,
But one which had achieved deliverance,
And wrought with shaping hands among the
stuff

Which fate presented. Had I shrunk from
Death?

Might I not therefore unashamed accept—
In a calm wonder of unfaltering joy—
Life, the fair gift he laid before my feet?
Somewhat a partner of his deed I seemed;
His equal? Nay, yet upright at his side
Scarce lower by a head and helmet's height.
Touching my Perseus' shoulder.

He has wrought
Great deeds. Athena loves to honour him;
And I have borne him sons. Look, yonder goes
Lifting the bow, Eleios, the last-born."

EURYDICE

" Now must this waste of vain desire have end:
Fetter these thoughts which traverse to and fro
The road which has no issue! We are judged.
O wherefore could I not uphold his heart?
Why claimed I not some partnership with him
In the strict test, urging my right of wife?
How have I let him fall? I, knowing thee
My Orpheus, bounteous giver of rich gifts,
Not all inured in practice of the will,
Worthier than I, yet weaker to sustain
An inner certitude against the blank
And silence of the senses; so no more
My heart helps thine, and henceforth there remains
No gift to thee from me, who would give all,
Only the memory of me growing faint
Until I seem a thing incredible,
Some high, sweet dream, which was not, nor could
be.
Ay, and in idle fields of asphodel
Must it not be that I shall fade indeed,
No memory of me, but myself; these hands

Ceasing from mastery and use, my thoughts
Losing distinction in the vague, sweet air,
The heart's swift pulses slackening to the sob
Of the forgetful river, with no deed
Pre-eminent to dare and to achieve,
No joy for climbing to, no clear resolve
From which the soul swerves never, no ill thing
To rid the world of, till I am no more
Eurydice, and shouldst thou at thy time
Descend, and hope to find a helpmate here,
I were grown slavish, like the girls men buy
Soft-bodied, foolish-faced, luxurious-eyed,
And meet to be another thing than wife.

Would that it had been thus: when the song
ceased

And laughterless Aidoneus lifted up
The face, and turned his grave persistent eyes
Upon the singer, I had forward stepped
And spoken—' King! he has wrought well, nor
failed,

Who ever heard divine large song like this,
Keener than sunbeam, wider than the air,
And shapely as the mould of faultless fruit?
And now his heart upon the gale of song
Soars with wide wing, and he is strong for flight,
Not strong for treading with the careful foot:
Grant me the naked trial of the will
Divested of all colour, scents and song:

The deed concerns the wife; I claim my share.'
O then because Persephone was by
With shadowed eyes when Orpheus sang of flowers,
He would have yielded. And I stepping forth
From the clear radiance of the singer's heights,
Made calm through vision of his wider truth,
And strengthened by deep beauty to hold fast
The presences of the invisible things,
Had led the way. I know how in that mood
He leans on me as babe on mother's breast,
Nor could he choose but let his foot descend
Where mine left lightest pressure; so are passed
The brute three-visaged, and the flowerless ways,
Nor have I turned my head; and now behold
The greyness of remote terrestrial light,
And I step swifter. Does he follow still?
O surely since his will embraces mine
Closer than clinging hand can clasp a hand:
No need to turn and dull with visible proof
The certitude that soul relies on soul!
So speed we to the day; and now we touch
Warm grass, and drink the Sun. O Earth, O
Sun,
Not you I need, but Orpheus' breast, and weep
The gladdest tears that ever woman shed,
And may be weak awhile, and need to know
The sustenance and comfort of his arms.

Self-foolery of dreams; come bitter truth.

Yet he has sung at least a perfect song
While the Gods heard him, and I stood beside
O not applauding, but at last content,
Fearless for him, and calm through perfect joy,
Seeing at length his foot upon the heights
Of highest song, by me discerned from far,
Now suddenly attained in confident
And errorless ascension. Did I ask
The lesser joy, lips' touch and clasping arms,
Or was not this salvation? For I urged
Always, in jealous service to his art,
' Now thou hast told their secrets to the trees
Of which they muse through lulled summer nights;
Thou hast gazed downwards in the formless gulf
Of the brute-mind, and canst control the will
Of snake, and brooding panther fiery-eyed,
And lark in middle heaven: leave these behind!
And let some careless singer of the fields
Set to the shallow sound of cymbal-stroke
The Faun a-dance; some less true-tempered soul,
Which cannot shape to harmony august
The splendour and the tumult of the world,
Inflame to frenzy of delirious rage
The Mœnad's breast; yea, and the hearts of
men,
Smoke of whose fire upcurls from little roofs,
Let singers of the wine-cup and the roast,
The whirling spear, the toy-like chariot-race,
And bickering counsel of contending kings

Delight them: leave thou these; sing thou for
Gods.'

And thou hast sung for Gods; and I have heard.

I shall not fade beneath this sunless sky,
Mixed in the wandering, ineffectual tribe;
For these have known no moment when the soul
Stood vindicated, laying sudden hands
On immortality of joy, and love
Which sought not, saw not, knew not, could not
know

The instruments of sense; I shall not fade.
Yea, and thy face detains me evermore
Within the realm of light. Love, wherefore blame
Thy heart because it sought me? Could the years'
Whole sum of various fashioned happiness
Exceed the measure of that eager face
Importunate and pure, still lit with song,
Turning from song to comfort of my love,
And thirsty for my presence? We are saved!
Yield Heracles, thou brawn and thews of Zeus,
Yield up thy glory on Thessalian ground,
Competitor of Death in single strife!
The lyre methinks outdoes the club and fist,
And beauty's ingress the outrageous force
Of tyrant though beneficent; supreme
This feat remains, a memory shaped for Gods.

Nor canst thou wholly lose me from thy life;

Still I am with thee; still my hand keeps thine;
Now I restrain from too intemperate grief
Being a portion of the thoughts that claim
Thy service; now I urge with that good pain
Which wastes and feeds the spirit, a desire
Unending; now I lurk within thy will
As vigour; now am gleaming through the world
As beauty; and if greater thoughts must lay
Their solemn light on thee, outshining mine,
And in some far faint-gleaming hour of Hell
I stand unknown and muffled by the boat
Leaning an eager ear to catch some speech
Of thee, and if some comer tell aloud
How Orpheus who had loved Eurydice
Was summoned by the Gods to fill with joy
And clamour of celestial song the courts
Of bright Olympus,—I, with pang of pride
And pain dissolved in rapture, will return
Appeased, with sense of conquest stern and high.”

But while she spoke, upon a chestnut trunk
Fallen from cliffs of Thracian Rhodope
Sat Orpheus, for he deemed himself alone,
And sang. But bands of wild-eyed women
roamed

The hills, whom he had passed with calm disdain.
And now the shrilling Berecynthian pipe
Sounded, blown horn, and frantic female cries:
He ceased from song and looked for the event.

BY THE SEA

I. THE ASSUMPTION

WHY would the open sky not be denied
Possession of me, when I sat to-day
Rock-couched, and round my feet the soft slave
 lay,
My singing Sea, dark-bosom'd, dusky-eyed?
She breathed low mystery of song, she sighed,
And stirred herself, and set lithe limbs to play
In blandishing serpent-wreaths, and would betray
An anklet gleaming, or a swaying side.
Why could she not detain me? Why must I
Devote myself to the dread Heaven, adore
The spacious pureness, the large ardour? why
Sprang forth my heart as though all wanderings
Had end? To what last bliss did I upsoar
Beating on indefatigable wings?

II. THE ARTIST'S WAITING

TENDER impatience quickening, quickening;
O heart within me that art grown a sea,
How vexed with longing all thy live waves be,
How broken with desire! A ceaseless wing
O'er every green sea-ridge goes fluttering,
And there are cries and long reluctance,

Swift ardours, and the clash of waters free,
Fain for the coming of some perfect Thing.
Emerge white Wonder, be thou born a Queen!
Let shine the splendours of thy loveliness
From the brow's radiance to the equal poise
Of calm, victorious feet; let thy serene
Command go forth; replenish with strong joys
The spaces and the sea-deeps measureless.

III. COUNSELLORS

WHO are chief counsellors of me? Who know
My heart's desire and every secret thing?
Three of one fellowship: the encompassing
Strong Sea, who mindful of Earth's ancient
 woe

Still surges on with swift, undaunted flow
That no sad shore should lack his comforting;
And next the serene Sky, whether he ring
With flawless blue a wilderness, or show
Tranced in the Twilight's arms his fair child-
 star;

Third of the three, eldest and lordliest,
Love, all whose wings are wide above my head,
Whose eyes are clearer heavens, whose lips have
 said

Low words more rare than the quired sea-songs
 are,—

O Love, high things and stern thou counsell'est.

IV. EVENING

LIGHT ebbs from off the Earth; the fields are
strange,
Dusk, trackless, tenantless; now the mute sky
Resigns itself to Night and Memory,
And no wind will yon sunken clouds derange,
No glory enrapture them; from cot or grange
The rare voice ceases; one long-breathèd sigh,
And steeped in summer sleep the world must lie;
All things are acquiescing in the change.
Hush! while the vaulted hollow of the night
Deepens, what voice is this the sea sends forth,
Disconsolate iterance, a passionless moan?
Ah! now the Day is gone, and tyrannous Light,
And the calm presence of fruit-bearing Earth:
Cry, Sea! it is thy hour; thou art alone.

V. JOY

SPRING-TIDES of Pleasure in the blood, keen thrill
Of eager nerves,—but ended as a dream;
Look! the wind quickens, and the long waves
gleam
Shoreward, and all this deep noon hour will fill
Each lone sea-cave with mirth immeasurable,
Huge sport of Ocean's brood; yet eve's red sky
Fades o'er spent waters, weltering sullenly,
The dank piled weed, the sand-waste grey and still.

Sad Pleasure in the moon's control! But Joy
Is stable; is discovered law; the birth
Of dreadful light; life's one imperative way;
The rigour hid in song; flowers' strict employ
Which turn to meet their sun; the roll of Earth
Swift and perpetual through the night and day.

VI. OCEAN

MORE than bare mountains 'neath a naked sky,
Or star-enchanted hollows of the night
When clouds are riven, or the most sacred light
Of summer dawns, art thou a mystery
And awe and terror and delight, O sea!
Our Earth is simple-hearted, sad to-day
Beneath the hush of snow, next morning gay
Because west-winds have promised to the lea
Violets and cuckoo-buds; and sweetly these
Live innocent lives, each flower in its green field,
Joying as children in sun, air, and sleep.
But thou art terrible, with the unrevealed
Burden of dim lamentful prophecies,
And thy lone life is passionate and deep.

VII. NEWS FOR LONDON

WHENCE may I glean a just return, my friend,
For tidings of your great world hither borne?
What garbs of new opinion men have worn
I wot not, nor what fame world-without-end

Sprouted last night, nor know I to contend
For Irving or the Italian; but forlorn
In this odd angle of the isle from morn
Till eve, nor sow, nor reap, nor get, nor spend.
Yet have I heard the sea-gulls scream for glee
Treading the drenched rock-ridges, and the gale
Hiss over tremulous heath-bells, while the bee
Driven sidelong quested low; and I have seen
The live sea-hollows, and moving mounds grey-
 green,
And watched the flying foam-bow flush and fail.

AMONG THE ROCKS

NEVER can we be strangers, you and I,
Nor quite disown our mysteries of kin,
Grey Sea-rocks, since I sat an hour to-day
Companion of the Ocean and of you.
I, sensitive soft flesh a thorn invades,
The light breath of a rose can win aside,
Flesh fashioned to be hourly tried and thrill'd,
Delighted, tortured, to betray whose ward
The unready heart is ruler, still surprised,
With emissary flushes swift and false,
And tremulous to touches of the stars.
You, spiny ridges of the land, rude backs,
Clawless and wingless, half-created things,
Monsters at ease before the sun and sea,
Untamed, unshrinking, unpersuadable,
My kindred.

For the wide-delivering womb
Which casts abroad a mammoth as a man,
And still conceals the new and better birth,
Bore me and you. Old parents of the Sphinx
What words primeval murmured in my ears
To-day between the lapping of the waves?
What recognitions flashed and disappeared?
What rare faint touches passed of sympathy
From you to me, from me to you? What sense

Of the ancestral things shadowed the heart,
Cloud-like, and with the pleasure of a cloud.
Therefore I know from henceforth that the shrill
Short crying of the sea-lark when his feet
Touch where the wave slips off the shining sand
Pierces you; and the wide and luminous air
Impregnate with sharp sea smells is to you
A passion and allurement; and the sun
At mid-day loads your sense with drowsy warmth,
And in the waver and echo of your caves,
You cherish memories of the billowy chaunt,
And ponder its dim prophecy.

And I,—

Lo here I strike upon the granite too,
Something is here austere and obdurate
As you are, something rugged and untamed.
A strength behind the will. I am not all
The shapely, agile creature named a man,
So artful, with the quick-conceiving brain,
Nerve-network, and the hand to grasp and hold,
Most dexterous of kinds that wage the strife
Of being through the years. I am not all
This creature with the various heart, alive
To curious joys, rare anguish, skilled in shames,
Prides, hatreds, loves, fears, frauds, the heart
which turns

A sudden venomous asp, the heart which bleeds
The red, great drops of glad self-sacrifice.
Pierce below these and seek the primal layer!

Behind Apollo loom the Earth-born Ones,
Half-god, half-brute; behind this symmetry,
This versatility of heart and brain
A strength abides, sustaining thought and love,
Untamed, unshrinking, unpersuadable,
At ease before the powers of Earth and Heaven,
Equal to any, of no younger years,
Calm as the greatest, haughty as the best,
Of imprescriptible authority.

Down upon you I sink, and leave myself,
My vain, frail self, and find repose on you,
Prime Force, whether amassed through myriad
 years
From dear accretions of dead ancestry,
Or ever welling from the source of things
In undulation vast and unperceived,
Down upon you I sink and lose myself!

My child that shouts and races on the sand
Your cry restores me. Have I been with Pan,
Kissing the hoofs of his goat-majesty?
You come, no granite of the nether earth,
Bright sea-flower rather, shining foam that flies,
Yet sweet as blossom of our inland fields.

TO A YEAR

FLY, Year, not backward down blind gulfs of
night,

Thick with the swarm of miscreated things:
Forth, flying year, through calms and broader light,
Clear-eyed, strong-bosom'd year, on strenuous
wings;

Bearing a song more high-intoned, more holy
Than the wild Swan's melodious melancholy,
More rapturous than the atom lark outflings.

I follow on slow foot and unsubdued:

Have I not heard thy cry across the wind?
Not seen thee, Slayer of the serpent brood,—
Error, and doubt, and death, and anguish blind?
I follow, I shall know thee by thy plumes
Flame-tipped, when on that morn of conquered
tombs,

I praise amidst my years the doom assigned.

A SONG OF THE NEW DAY

THE tender Sorrows of the twilight leave me,
And shall I want the fanning of smooth wings?
Shall I not miss sweet sorrows? Will it grieve me
To hear no cooing from soft dove-like things?

Let Evening hear them! O wide Dawn uprisen,
Know me all thine; and ye, whose level flight
Has pierced the drear hours and the cloudy prison,
Cry for the pathless spaces and the light!

SWALLOWS

WIDE fields of air left luminous,
Though now the uplands comprehend
How the sun's loss is ultimate:
The silence grows; but still to us
From yon air-winnowing breasts elate
The tiny shrieks of glee descend.

Deft wings, each moment is resigned
Some touch of day, some pulse of light,
While yet in poised, delicious curve,
Ecstatic doublings down the wind,
Light dash and dip and sidelong swerve,
You try each dainty trick of flight.

Will not your airy glee relent
At all? The aimless frolic cease?
Know ye no touch of quelling pain,
Nor joy's more strict admonishment,
No tender awe at day-light's wane,
Ye slaves of delicate caprice?

Hush, once again that cry intense!
High-venturing spirits have your will!

Urge the last freak, prolong your glee,
Keen voyagers, while still the immense
Sea-spaces haunt your memory,
With zests and pangs ineffable.

Not in the sunshine of old woods
Ye won your warrant to be gay
By duteous, sweet observances,
Who dared through darkening solitudes,
And 'mid the hiss of alien seas,
The larger ordinance obey.

MEMORIALS OF TRAVEL

I. COACHING

(In Scotland)

WHERE have I been this perfect summer day,
—Or *fortnight* is it, since I rose from bed,
Devour'd that kippered fish, the oatmeal bread,
And mounted to this box? O bowl away
Swift stagers through the dusk, I will not say
“Enough,” nor care where I have been or be,
Nor know one name of hill, or lake, or lea,
Or moor, or glen! Were not the clouds at play
Nameless among the hills, and fair as dreams?
On such a day we must love things not words,
And memory take or leave them as they are.
On such a day! What unimagined streams
Are in the world, how many haunts of birds,
What fields and flowers,—and what an evening
Star!

II. IN A MOUNTAIN PASS

(In Scotland)

To what wild blasts of tyrannous harmony
Uprose these rocky walls, mass threatening mass,
Dusk, shapeless shapes, around a desolate pass?
What deep heart of the ancient hills set free
The passion, the desire, the destiny

Of this lost stream? Yon clouds that break and
form,
Light vanward squadrons of the joyous storm,
They gather hither from what untrack'd sea?
Primeval kindred! here the mind regains
Its vantage ground against the world; here thought
Wings up the silent waste of air on broad
Undaunted pinion; man's imperial pains
Are ours, and visiting fears, and joy unsought,
Native resolve, and partnership with God.

III. THE CASTLE

(In Scotland)

THE tenderest ripple touched and touched the
shore;
The tenderest light was in the western sky;—
Its one soft phrase, closing reluctantly,
The sea articulated o'er and o'er
To comfort all tired things; and one might pore,
Till mere oblivion took the heart and eye,
On that slow-fading, amber radiancy
Past the long levels of the ocean-floor.
A turn,—the castle fronted me, four-square,
Holding its seaward crag, abrupt, intense
Against the west, an apparition bold
Of naked human will; I stood aware,
With sea and sky, of powers unowned of sense,
Presences awful, vast, and uncontrolled.

IV. Ἀισθητικὴ φαντασία

(In Ireland)

THE sound is in my ears of mountain streams!
 I cannot close my lids but some grey rent
 Of wildered rock, some water's clear descent
 In shattering crystal, pine-trees soft as dreams
 Waving perpetually, the sudden gleams
 Of remote sea, a dear surprise of flowers,
 Some grace or wonder of to-day's long hours
 Straightway possesses the moved sense, which
 teems

With fantasy unbid. O fair, large day!
 The unpractised sense brings heavings from a sea
 Of life too broad, and yet the billows range,
 The elusive footing glides. Come, Sleep, allay
 The trouble with thy heaviest balms, and change
 These pulsing visions to still Memory.

V. ON THE SEA-CLIFF

(In Ireland)

RUINS of a church with its miraculous well,
 O'er which the Christ, a squat-limbed dwarf, of
 stone,
 Great-eyed, and huddled on his cross, has known
 The sea-mists and the sunshine, stars that fell
 And stars that rose, fierce winter's chronicle,

And centuries of dead summers. From his throne
Fronting the dawn the elf has ruled alone,
And saved this region fair from pagan hell.
Turn! June's great joy abroad; each bird, flower,
stream
Loves life, loves love; wide ocean amorously
Spreads to the sun's embrace; the dulse-weeds
sway,
The glad gulls are afloat. Grey Christ to-day
Our ban on thee! Rise, let the white breasts
gleam,
Unvanquished Venus of the northern sea!

VI. ASCETIC NATURE

(In Ireland)

PASSION and song, and the adorned hours
Of floral loveliness, hopes grown most sweet,
And generous patience in the ripening heat,
A mother's bosom, a bride's face of flowers
—Knows Nature aught so fair? Witness ye
Powers
Which rule the virgin heart of this retreat
To rarer issues, ye who render meet
Earth, purged and pure, for gracious heavenly
dowers!
The luminous pale lake, the pearl-grey sky,
The wave that gravely murmurs meek desires,

The abashed yet lit expectance of the whole,
—These and their beauty speak of earthly fires
Long quenched, clear aims, deliberate sanctity,—
O'er the white forehead lo! the aureole.

VII. RELICS

(In Switzerland)

WHAT relic of the dear, dead yesterday
Shall my heart keep? The visionary light
Of dawn? Alas! it is a thing too bright,
God does not give such memories away.
Nor choose I one fair flower of those that sway
To the chill breathing of the waterfall
In rocky angles black with scattering spray,
Fair though no sunbeam lays its coronal
Of light on their pale brows; nor glacier-gleam
I choose, nor eve's red glamour; 'twas at noon
Resting I found this speedwell, while a stream,
That knew the immemorial inland croon,
Sang in my ears, and lulled me to a dream
Of English meadows, and one perfect June.

VIII. ON THE PIER OF BOULOGNE

(A Reminiscence of 1870)

A VENAL singer to a thrumming note
Chanted the civic war-song, that red flower
Of melody seized in a sudden hour

By frenzied winds of change, and borne afloat
A live light in the storm; and now by rote
To a cold crowd, while vague and sad the tide
Loomed after sunset and the grey gulls cried,
The verses quavered from a hireling throat.
Wherefore should English eyes their right forbear,
Or droop for smitten France? let the tossed sou,
Before they turn, be quittance for the stare. \n
O Lady, who, clear-voiced, with impulse true
To lift that cry "*To Arms!*" alone would dare,
My heart received a golden alms from you!

IX. DOVER

(In a Field)

A JOY has met me on this English ground
I looked not for. O gladness, fields still green!
Listen,—the going of a murmurous sound
Along the corn; there is not to be seen
In all the land a single pilèd sheaf
Or line of grain new-fallen, and not a tree
Has felt as yet within its lightest leaf
The year's despair; nay, Summer saves for me
Her bright, late flowers. O my Summer-time
Named low as lost, I turn, and find you here—
Where else but in our blessed English clime
That lingers o'er the sweet days of the year,
Days of long dreaming under spacious skies
Ere melancholy winds of Autumn rise.

AN AUTUMN SONG

LONG Autumn rain;
White mists which choke the vale, and blot the
sides
Of the bewildered hills; in all the plain
No field agleam where the gold pageant was,
And silent o'er a tangle of drenched grass
The blackbird glides.

In the heart,—fire,
Fire and clear air and cries of water-springs,
And large, pure winds; all April's quick desire,
All June's possession; a most fearless Earth
Drinking great ardours; and the rapturous birth
Of wingèd things.

BURDENS

ARE sorrows hard to bear,—the ruin
Of flowers, the rotting of red fruit,
A love's decease, a life's undoing,
And summer slain, and song-birds mute,
And skies of snow and bitter air?
These things, you deem, are hard to bear.

But ah, the burden, the delight
Of dreadful joys! Noon opening wide,
Golden and great; the gulfs of night,
Fair deaths, and rent veils cast aside,
Strong soul to strong soul rendered up,
And silence filling like a cup.

SONG

(From "'Tis Pity she's a Queen."—A.D. 1610.)

ACT IV. SCENE 2.

*The LADY MARGARET, with SUSAN and LUCY ; LADY M.
at her embroidery frame, singing.*

GIRLS, when I am gone away,
On this bosom strew
Only flowers meek and pale,
And the yew.

Lay these hands down by my side,
Let my face be bare ;
Bind a kerchief round the face,
Smooth my hair.

Let my bier be borne at dawn,
Summer grows so sweet,
Deep into the forest green
Where boughs meet.

Then pass away, and let me lie
One long, warm, sweet day
There alone with face upturn'd,
One sweet day.

While the morning light grows broad,
While noon sleepeth sound,
While the evening falls and faints,
While the world goes round.

Susan. Whence had you this song, lady?

L. Mar. Out of the air;
From no one an it be not from the wind
That goes at noonday in the sycamore
trees.

—When said the tardy page he would
return?

Susan. By twelve, upon this very hour.

L. Mar. Look now,
The sand falls down the glass with even
pace,
The shadows lie like yesterday's.
Nothing
Is wrong with the world. You are a part
of it,—
I stand within a magic circle charm'd
From reach of anything, shut in from
you,
Leagues from my needle, and this frame
I touch,
Waiting till doomsday come—
[*Knocking heard*] The messenger!
Quick, I will wait you here, and hold my
heart
Ready for death, or too much ravish-
ment.

[*Exeunt both Girls.*]

How the little sand-hill slides and slides;
how many

Red grains would drop while a man's
keen knife drawn

Across one's heart let the red life out?

Susan. [returning] Lady!

L. Mar. I know it by your eyes. O do not fear
To tell all punctually: I am carved of
stone.

BY THE WINDOW

STILL deep into the West I gazed; the light
Clear, spiritual, tranquil as a bird
Wide-winged that soars on the smooth gale and
sleeps,

Was it from sun far-set or moon unrisen?
Whether from moon, or sun, or angel's face
It held my heart from motion, stayed my blood,
Betrayed each rising thought to quiet death
Along the blind charm'd way to nothingness,
Lull'd the last nerve that ached. It was a sky
Made for a man to waste his will upon,
To be received as wiser than all toil,
And much more fair. And what was strife of men?
And what was time?

Then came a certain thing.

Are intimations for the elected soul
Dubious, obscure, of unauthentic power
Since ghostly to the intellectual eye,
Shapeless to thinking? Nay, but are not we
Servile to words and an usurping brain,
Infidels of our own high mysteries,
Until the senses thicken and lose the world,
Until the imprisoned soul forgets to see,
And spreads blind fingers forth to reach the day,
Which once drank light, and fed on angels' food?
It happened swiftly, came and straight was gone.

One standing on some aery balcony
And looking down upon a swarming crowd
Sees one man beckon to him with finger-tip
While eyes meet eyes; he turns and looks again—
The man is lost, and the crowd sways and swarms.
Shall such an one say " Thus 'tis proved a dream,
And no hand beckoned, no eyes met my own? "
Neither can I say this. There was a hint,
A thrill, a summons faint yet absolute,
Which ran across the West; the sky was touch'd,
And failed not to respond. Does a hand pass
Lightly across your hair? you feel it pass
Not half so heavy as a cobweb's weight,
Although you never stir; so felt the sky
Not unaware of the Presence, so my soul
Scarce less aware. And if I cannot say
The meaning and monition, words are weak
Which will not paint the small wing of a moth,
Nor bear a subtile odour to the brain,
And much less serve the soul in her large needs.
I cannot tell the meaning, but a change
Was wrought in me; it was not the one man
Who come to the luminous window to gaze forth,
And who moved back into the darkened room
With awe upon his heart and tender hope;
From some deep well of life tears rose; the throng
Of dusty cares, hopes, pleasures, prides fell off,
And from a sacred solitude I gazed
Deep, deep into the liquid eyes of Life.

SUNSETS

DID your eyes watch the mystic sunset splendours
Through evenings of old summers, slow of
parting,—
Wistful while loveliest gains and fair surrenders
Hallow'd the West,—till tremulous tears came
starting?

Did your soul wing her way on noiseless pinion
Through lucid fields of air, and penetrated
With light and silence roam the wide dominion
Where Day and Dusk embrace,—serene, un-
mated?

And they are past the shining hours and tender,
And snows are fallen between, and winds are
driven?

Nay, for I find across your face the splendour,
And in your wings the central winds of heaven.

They reach me, those lost sunsets. Undivining
Your own high mysteries you pause and ponder;
See, in my eyes the vanished light is shining,
Feel, through what spaces of clear heaven I
wander!

OASIS

LET them go by—the heats, the doubts, the strife;
I can sit here and care not for them now,
Dreaming beside the glimmering wave of life
Once more,—I know not how.

There is a murmur in my heart, I hear
Faint, O so faint, some air I used to sing;
It stirs my sense; and odours dim and dear
The meadow-breezes bring.

Just this way did the quiet twilights fade
Over the fields and happy homes of men,
While one bird sang as now, piercing the shade,
Long since,—I know not when.

FOREIGN SPEECH

Ан, do not tell me what they mean,
The tremulous brook, the scarcely stirred
June leaves, the hum of things unseen,
This sovran bird.

Do they say things so deep, and rare,
And perfect? I can only tell
That they are happy, and can bear
Such ignorance well;

Feeding on all things said and sung
From hour to hour in this high wood
Articulate in a strange, sweet tongue
Not understood.

IN THE TWILIGHT

A NOISE of swarming thoughts,
A muster of dim cares, a foil'd intent,
With plots and plans, and counterplans and
plots;
And thus along the city's edges grey
Unmindful of the darkening autumn day
With a droop'd head I went.

My face rose,—through what spell?—
Not hoping anything from twilight dumb:
One star possessed her heaven. Oh! all grew
well
Because of thee, and thy serene estate:
Silence . . . I let thy beauty make me great;
What though the black night come.

THE INNER LIFE

I. A DISCIPLE

MASTER, they argued fast concerning Thee,
Proved what Thou art, denied what Thou art not,
Till brows were on the fret, and eyes grew hot,
And lip and chin were thrust out eagerly;
Then through the temple-door I slipped to free
My soul from secret ache in solitude,
And sought this brook, and by the brookside stood
The world's Light, and the Light and Life of me.
It is enough, O Master, speak no word!
The stream speaks, and the endurance of the sky
Outpasses speech: I seek not to discern
Even what smiles for me Thy lips have stirred;
Only in Thy hand still let my hand lie,
And let the musing soul within me burn.

II. THEISTS

WHO needs God most? That man whose pulses play
With fullest life-blood; he whose foot dare climb
To Joy's high limit, solitude sublime
Under a sky whose splendour sure must slay
If Godless; he who owns the sovereign sway
Of that small inner voice and still, what time
His whole life urges toward one blissful crime,

And Hell confuses Heaven, and night, the day.
It is he whose faithfulness of love puts by
Time's anodyne, and that gross palliative,
A Stoic pride, and bears all humanly;
He whose soul grows one long desire to give
Measureless gifts; ah! let *him* quickly die
Unless he lift frail hands to God and live.

III. SEEKING GOD

I SAID "I will find God," and forth I went
To seek Him in the clearness of the sky,
But over me stood unendurably
Only a pitiless, sapphire firmament
Ringing the world,—blank splendour; yet intent
Still to find God, "I will go and seek," said I,
"His way upon the waters," and drew nigh
An ocean marge weed-strewn and foam-besprent;
And the waves dashed on idle sand and stone,
And very vacant was the long, blue sea;
But in the evening as I sat alone,
My window open to the vanishing day,
Dear God! I could not choose but kneel and pray
And it sufficed that I was found of Thee.

IV. DARWINISM IN MORALS

HIGH instincts, dim previsions, sacred fears,
—Whence issuing? Are they but the brain's
amassed

Tradition, shapings of a barbarous past,
Remoulded ever by the younger years,
Mixed with fresh clay, and kneaded with new tears?
No more? The dead chief's ghost a shadow cast
Across the roving clan, and thence at last
Comes God, who in the soul His law uprears?
Is this the whole? Has not the Future powers
To match the Past,—attractions, pulsings, tides,
And voices for purged ears? Is all our light
The glow of ancient sunsets and lost hours?
Advance no banners up heaven's eastern sides?
Trembles the margin with no portent bright?

V. AWAKENING

WITH brain o'erworn, with heart a summer clod,
With eye so practised in each form around,—
And all forms mean,—to glance above the ground
Irks it, each day of many days we plod,
Tongue-tied and deaf, along life's common road.
But suddenly, we know not how, a sound
Of living streams, an odour, a flower crowned
With dew, a lark upspringing from the sod,
And we awake. O joy and deep amaze!
Beneath the everlasting hills we stand,
We hear the voices of the morning seas,
And earnest prophesyings in the land,
While from the open heaven leans forth at gaze
The encompassing great cloud of witnesses.

VI. FISHERS

WE by no shining Galilean lake
Have toiled, but long and little fruitfully
In waves of a more old and bitter sea
Our nets we cast; large winds, that sleep and wake
Around the feet of Dawn and Sunset, make
Our spiritual inhuman company,
And formless shadows of water rise and flee
All night around us till the morning break.
Thus our lives wear—shall it be ever thus?
Some idle day, when least we look for grace,
Shall we see stand upon the shore indeed
The visible Master, and the Lord of us,
And leave our nets, nor question of His creed,
Following the Christ within a young man's face?

VII. COMMUNION

LORD, I have knelt and tried to pray to-night,
But Thy love came upon me like a sleep,
And all desire died out; upon the deep
Of Thy mere love I lay, each thought in light
Dissolving like the sunset clouds, at rest
Each tremulous wish, and my strength weakness,
sweet
As a sick boy with soon o'erwearied feet
Finds, yielding him unto his mother's breast
To weep for weakness there. I could not pray,

But with closed eyes I felt Thy bosom's love
 Beating toward mine, and then I would not move
 Till of itself the joy should pass away;
 At last my heart found voice,—“ Take me, O Lord,
 And do with me according to Thy word.”

VIII. A SONNET FOR THE TIMES

WHAT! weeping? Had ye your Christ yesterday,
 Close wound in linen, made your own by tears,
 Kisses, and pounds of myrrh, the sepulchre's
 Mere stone most venerable? And now ye say
 “ No man hath seen Him, He is borne away
 We wot not where.” And so, with many a sigh,
 Watching the linen clothes and napkin lie,
 Ye choose about the grave's sad mouth to stay.
 Blind hearts! Why seek the living amongst the
 dead?

Better than carols for the babe new-born
 The shining young men's speech “ He is not here; ”
 Why question where the feet lay, where the head?
 Come forth; bright o'er the world breaks Easter
 morn,
 He is arisen, Victor o'er grief and fear.

IX. EMMAUSWARD

LORD CHRIST, if Thou art with us and these eyes
 Are holden, while we go sadly and say

" We hoped it had been He, and now to-day
Is the third day, and hope within us dies,"
Bear with us, O our Master, Thou art wise
And knowest our foolishness; we do not pray
" Declare Thyself, since weary grows the way
And faith's new burden hard upon us lies."
Nay, choose Thy time; but ah! whoe'er Thou art
Leave us not; where have we heard any voice
Like Thine? Our hearts burn in us as we go;
Stay with us; break our bread; so, for our part
Ere darkness falls haply we may rejoice,
Haply when day has been far spent may know.

X. A FAREWELL

THOU movest from us; we shall see Thy face
No more. Ah, look below these troubled eyes,
This woman's heart in us that faints and dies,
Trust not our faltering lips, our sad amaze;
Glance some time downward from Thy golden place,
And know how we rejoice. It is meet, is wise;
High tasks are Thine, surrenders, victories,
Communings pure, mysterious works and ways.
Leave us: how should we keep Thee in these blown
Grey fields, or soil with earth a Master's feet?
Nor deem us comfortless: have we not known
Thee once, for ever. Friend, the pain is sweet
Seeing Thy completeness to have grown complete,
Thy gift it is that we can walk alone.

XI. DELIVERANCE

I PRAYED to be delivered, O true God,
Not from the foes that compass us about,—
Them I might combat; not from any doubt
That wrings the soul; not from Thy bitter rod
Smiting the conscience; not from plagues abroad,
Nor my strong inward lusts; nor from the rout
Of worldly men, the scourge, the spit, the flout,
And the whole dolorous way the Master trod.
All these would rouse the life that lurks within,
Would save or slay; these things might be defied
Or strenuously endured; yea, pressed by sin
The soul is stung with sudden, visiting gleams;
Leave these, if Thou but scatter, Lord, I cried,
The counterfeiting shadows and vain dreams.

XII. PARADISE LOST

O WOULD you read that Hebrew legend true
Look deep into the little children's eyes,
Who walk with naked souls in Paradise,
And know not shame; who, with miraculous dew
To keep the garden ever fair and new,
Want not our sobbing rains in their blue skies.
Among the trees God moves, and o'er them rise
All night in deeper heavens great stars to view.
Ah, how we wept when through the gate we came!

What boots it to look back? The world is ours,
Come, we will fare, my brothers, boldly forth;
Let that dread Angel wave the sword of flame
Forever idly round relinquished bowers—
Leave Eden there; we will subdue the earth.

THE RESTING PLACE

How all things transitory, all things vain
Desert me! Whither am I sinking slow
On the prone wing, to what predestined home,
What peace beyond all peace, what ultimate joy?
Nay, cease from questioning, care not to know,
Let bliss dissolve each thought, all function cease,
Fold close the wing, let the soft-flowing light
Permeate, and merely once uplift drooped lids
To mark the world remote, the abandoned shore,
Fretted with much vain pleasure, futile pain,
Far, far.

The deepening peace! a dawn of essences
Awful and incommunicably dear!
Grace opening into grace, joy quenching joy!
Thy waves and billows have gone over me
Blissful and calm, and still the dreams drop off,
And true things grow more true, and larger orbs
The strong salvation which has seized my soul.

The stream of the attraction draws me on
Toward some centre; all will quickly end,
All be attained. The sweetness of repose
And this swift motion slay the consciousness
Of being, and bind up the will in sleep.
Silence and light accept my soul—I touch
Is it death's centre or the breast of God?

NEW HYMNS FOR SOLITUDE

I

I COME to Thee not asking aught; I crave
No gift of Thine, no grace;
Yet where the suppliants enter let me have
Within Thy courts a place.

My hands, my heart contain no offering;
Thy name I would not bless
With lips untouched by altar-fire; I bring
Only my weariness.

These are the children, frequent in Thy home;
Grant, Lord, to each his share;
Then turn, and merely gaze on me, who come
To lay my spirit bare.

II

YET one more step—no flight
The weary soul can bear—
Into a whiter light,
Into a hush more rare.

Take me, I am all Thine,
Thine now, not seeking Thee,—
Hid in the secret shrine,
Lost in the shoreless sea.

Grant to the prostrate soul
Prostration new and sweet,
Make weak the weak, control
Thy creature at Thy feet.

Passive I lie: shine down,
Pierce through the will with straight
Swift beams, one after one,
Divide, disintegrate,

Free me from self,—resume
My place, and be Thou there;
Yet also keep me. Come
Thou Saviour and Thou Slayer!

III

NOTHING remains to say to Thee, O Lord,
I am confessed,
All my lips' empty crying Thou hast heard,
My unrest, my rest.
Why wait I any longer? Thou dost stay,
And therefore, Lord, I would not go away.

Let me be at Thy feet a little space,
Forget me here;
I will not touch Thy hand, nor seek Thy face,
Only be near,

And this hour let Thy nearness feed the heart,
And when Thou goest I also will depart.

Then when Thou seekest Thy way, and I, mine
Let the World be
Not wide and cold after this cherishing shrine
Illum'd by Thee,
Nay, but worth worship, fair, a radiant star,
Tender and strong as Thy chief angels are.

Yet bid me not go forth: I cannot now
Take hold on joy,
Nor sing the swift, glad song, nor bind my brow;
Her wise employ
Be mine, the silent woman at Thy knee
In the low room in little Bethany.

IV

AH, that sharp thrill through all my frame!
And yet once more! Withstand
I can no longer; in Thy name
I yield me to Thy hand.

Such pangs were in the soul unborn,
The fear, the joy were such,
When first it felt in that keen morn
A dread, creating touch.

Maker of man, Thy pressure sure
This grosser stuff must quell;
The spirit faints, yet will endure,
Subdue, control, compel.

The Potter's finger shaping me
Praise, praise! the clay curves up
Not for dishonour, though it be
God's least adorned cup.

v

SINS grew a heavy load and cold,
And pressed me to the dust;
"Whither," I cried, "can this be rolled
Ere I behold the Just?"

But now I claim them for my own;
Thy face I needs must find;
Lo! thus I wrought, yea, I alone,
Not weak, beguiled, or blind.

See my full arms, my heaped-up shame,
An evil load I bring:
Thou, God, art a consuming flame,
Accept the hateful thing.

Pronounce the dread condemning word,
I stand in blessed fear;
Dear is Thy cleansing wrath, O Lord,
The fire that burns is dear.

VI

I FOUND Thee in my heart, O Lord,
As in some secret shrine;
I knelt, I waited for Thy word,
I joyed to name Thee mine.

I feared to give myself away
To that or this; beside
Thy altar on my face I lay,
And in strong need I cried.

Those hours are past. Thou art not mine,
And therefore I rejoice,
I wait within no holy shrine,
I faint not for the voice.

In Thee we live; and every wind
Of heaven is Thine; blown free
To west, to east, the God unshrined
Is still discovering me.

IN THE CATHEDRAL CLOSE

IN the Dean's porch a nest of clay
With five small tenants may be seen,
Five solemn faces, each as wise
As though its owner were a Dean;

Five downy fledglings in a row,
Packed close, as in the antique pew
The school-girls are whose foreheads clear
At the *Venite* shine on you.

Day after day the swallows sit
With scarce a stir, with scarce a sound,
But dreaming and digesting much
They grow thus wise and soft and round.

They watch the Canons come to dine,
And hear the mullion-bars across,
Over the fragrant fruit and wine
Deep talk of rood-screen and reredos.

Her hands with field-flowers drench'd, a child
Leaps past in wind-blown dress and hair,
The swallows turn their heads askew—
Five judges deem that she is fair.

Prelusive touches sound within,
Straightway they recognize the sign,

And, blandly nodding, they approve
The minuet of Rubinstein.

They mark the cousins' schoolboy talk,
 (Male birds flown wide from minster bell),
And blink at each broad term of art,
 Binomial or bicycle.

Ah! downy young ones, soft and warm,
 Doth such a stillness mask from sight
Such swiftness? can such peace conceal
 Passion and ecstasy of flight?

Yet somewhere 'mid your Eastern suns,
 Under a white Greek architrave
At morn, or when the shaft of fire
 Lies large upon the Indian wave,

A sense of something dear gone-by
 Will stir, strange longings thrill the heart
For a small world embowered and close,
 Of which ye some time were a part.

The dew-drench'd flowers, the child's glad eyes
 Your joy unhuman shall control,
And in your wings a light and wind
 Shall move from the Maestro's soul.

FIRST LOVE

My long first year of perfect love,
My deep new dream of joy;
She was a little chubby girl,
I was a chubby boy.

I wore a crimson frock, white drawers,
A belt, a crown was on it;
She wore some angel's kind of dress
And such a tiny bonnet,

Old-fashioned, but the soft brown hair
Would never keep its place;
A little maid with violet eyes,
And sunshine in her face.

O my child-queen, in those lost days
How sweet was daily living!
How humble and how proud I grew,
How rich by merely giving!

She went to school, the parlour-maid
Slow stepping to her trot;
That parlour-maid, ah, did she feel
How lofty was her lot!

Across the road I saw her lift
My Queen, and with a sigh
I envied Raleigh; my new coat
Was hung a peg too high.

A hoard of never-given gifts
I cherished,—priceless pelf;
'Twas two whole days ere I devour'd
That peppermint myself.

In Church I only prayed for her—
“ O God bless Lucy Hill; ”
Child, may His angels keep their arms
Ever around you still.

But when the hymn came round, with heart
That feared some heart's surprising
Its secret sweet, I climb'd the seat
'Mid rustling and uprising;

And there against her mother's arm
The sleeping child was leaning,
While far away the hymn went on,
The music and the meaning.

Oh I have loved with more of pain
Since then, with more of passion,
Loved with the aching in my love
After our grown-up fashion;

Yet could I almost be content
To lose here at your feet
A year or two, you murmuring elm,
To dream a dream so sweet.

THE SECRET OF THE UNIVERSE:
AN ODE

(By a Western Spinning Dervish)

I SPIN, I spin, around, around,
And close my eyes,
And let the bile arise
From the sacred region of the soul's Profound;
Then gaze upon the world; how strange! how new!
The earth and heaven are one,
The horizon-line is gone,
The sky how green! the land how fair and blue!
Perplexing items fade from my large view,
And thought which vexed me with its false and
true
Is swallowed up in Intuition; this,
This is the sole true mode
Of reaching God,
And gaining the universal synthesis
Which makes All—One; while fools with peering
eyes
Dissect, divide, and vainly analyse.
So round, and round, and round again!
How the whole globe swells within my brain,
The stars inside my lids appear,
The murmur of the spheres I hear
Throbbing and beating in each ear;

Right in my navel I can feel
The centre of the world's great wheel.
Ah peace divine, bliss dear and deep,
 No stay, no stop,
 Like any top
Whirling with swiftest speed, I sleep.
O ye devout ones round me coming,
Listen! I think that I am humming;
 No utterance of the servile mind
With poor chop-logic rules agreeing
 Here shall ye find,
But inarticulate burr of man's unsundered being.
Ah, could we but devise some plan,
Some patent jack by which a man
Might hold himself ever in harmony
With the great Whole, and spin perpetually,
 As all things spin
 Without, within,
As Time spins off into Eternity,
And Space into the inane Immensity,
And the Finite into God's Infinity,
 Spin, spin, spin, spin.

BEAU RIVAGE HOTEL

SATURDAY EVENING

BELOW there's a brumming and strumming
And twiddling and fiddling amain,
And sweeping of muslins and laughter,
And pattering of luminous rain.

Fair England, resplendent Columbia,
Gaul, Teuton,—how precious a smother!
But the happiest is brisk little Polly
To galop with only her brother.

And up to the fourth étage landing,
Come the violins' passionate cries,
Where the pale femme-de-chambre is sitting
With sleep in her beautiful eyes.

IN A JUNE NIGHT

(A Study in the manner of Robert Browning)

I

SEE, the door opens of this alcove,
Here we are now in the cool night air
Out of the heat and smother; above
The stars are a wonder, alive and fair,
It is a perfect night,—your hand,—
Down these steps and we reach the garden,
An odorous, dim, enchanted land,
With the dusk stone-god for only warden.

II

Was I not right to bring you here?
We might have seen slip the hours within
Till God's new day in the East were clear,
And His silence abashed the dancers' din,
Then each have gone away, the pain
And longing greatened, not satisfied,
By a hand's slight touch or a glance's gain,—
And now we are standing side by side!

III

Come to the garden's end,—not so,
Not by the grass, it would drench your feet;

See, here is a path where the trees o'ergrow
And the fireflies flicker; but, my sweet,
Lean on me now, for one cannot see
Here where the great leaves lie unfurled
To take the whole soul and the mystery
Of a summer night poured out for the world.

IV

Into the open air once more!
Yonder's the edge of the garden-wall
Where we may sit and talk,—deplore
This half-hour lost from so bright a ball,
Or praise my partner with the eyes
And the raven hair, or the other one
With her flaxen curls, and slow replies
As near asleep in the Tuscan sun.

V

Hush! do you hear on the beach's cirque
Just below, though the lake is dim,
How the little ripples do their work,
Fall and faint on the pebbled rim,
So they say what they want, and then
Break at the marge's feet and die;
It is so different with us men
Who never can once speak perfectly.

VI

Yet hear me,—trust that they mean indeed
Oh, so much more than the words will say

Or shall it be 'twixt us two agreed
That all we might spend a night and day
In striving to put in a word or thought,
Which were then from ourselves a thing apart,
Shall be just believed and quite forgot,
When my heart is felt against your heart.

VII

Ah, but that will not tell you all,
How I am yours not thus alone,
To find how your pulses rise and fall,
And winning you wholly be your own,
But yours to be humble, could you grow
The Queen that you are, remote and proud,
And I with only a life to throw
Where the others' flowers for your feet were
stowed.

VIII

Well, you have faults too! I can blame
If you choose: this hand is not so white
Or round as a little one that came
On my shoulder once or twice to-night
Like a soft white dove. Envy her now!
And when you talked to that padded thing
And I passed you leisurely by, your brow
Was cold, not a flush nor fluttering.

IX

Such foolish talk! while that one star still
Dwells o'er the mountain's margin-line
Till the dawn takes all; one may drink one's fill
Of such quiet; there's a whisper fine
In the leaves a-tremble, and now 'tis dumb;
We have lived long years, love, you and I,
And the heart grows faint; your lips, then:
come,—
It were not so very hard to die.

FROM APRIL TO OCTOBER

I. BEAUTY

THE beauty of the world, the loveliness
Of woodland pools, which doves have coo'd to
 sleep,
Dreaming the noontide through beneath the deep
Of heaven; the radiant blue's benign caress
When April clouds are rifted; buds that bless
Each little nook and bower, where the leaves keep
Dew and light shadow, and quick lizards peep
For sunshine,—these, and the ancient stars no less,
And the sea's mystery of dusk and bright
Are but the curious characters that lie,
Priestess of Beauty, in thy robe of light.
Ah, where, divine One, is thy veiled retreat,
That I may creep to it and clasp thy feet,
And gaze in thy pure face though I should die?

II. TWO INFINITIES

A LONELY way, and as I went my eyes
Could not unfasten from the Spring's sweet things,
Lush-sprouted grass, and all that climbs and clings
In loose, deep hedges, where the primrose lies
In her own fairness, buried blooms surprise
The plunderer bee and stop his murmurings,
And the glad flutter of a finch's wings

Outstartle small blue-speckled butterflies.
Blissfully did one speedwell plot beguile
My whole heart long; I loved each separate flower,
Kneeling. I looked up suddenly—Dear God!
There stretched the shining plain for many a mile,
The mountains rose with what invincible power!
And how the sky was fathomless and broad!

III. THE DAWN

THE Dawn,—O silence and wise mystery!
Was it a dream, the murmurous room, the glitter,
The tinkling songs, the dance, and that fair sitter
I talk'd æsthetics to so rapturously?
Sweet Heaven, thy silentness and purity,
Thy sister-words of blame, not railings bitter,
With these great quiet leaves, and the light twitter
Of small birds wakening in the greenery,
And one stream stepping quickly on its way
So well it knows the glad work it must do,
Reclaim a wayward heart scarce answering true
To that sweet strain of hours that closes May;
How the pale marge quickens with pulsings new,
O welcome to thy world thou fair, great day!

IV. THE SKYLARK

THERE drops our lark into his secret nest!
All is felt silence and the broad blue sky;
Come, the incessant rain of melody
Is over; now earth's quietudes invest,

In cool and shadowy limit, that wild breast
Which trembled forth the sudden ecstasy
Till raptures came too swift, and song must die
Since midmost deeps of heaven grew manifest.
My poet of the garden-walk last night
Sang in rich leisure, ceased and sang again,
Of pleasure in green leaves, of odours given
By flowers at dusk, and many a dim delight;
The finer joy was thine keen-edged with pain,
Soarer! alone with thy own heart and heaven.

V. THE MILL-RACE

“ ONLY a mill-race,” said they, and went by,
But we were wiser, spoke no word, and stayed;
It was a place to make the heart afraid
With so much beauty, lest the after sigh,
When one had drunk its sweetness utterly,
Should leave the spirit faint; a living shade
From beechen branches o’er the water played
To unweave that spell through which the con-
quering sky
Subdues the sweet will of each summer stream;
So this ran freshlier through the swaying weeds.
I gazed until the whole was as a dream,
Nor should have waked or wondered had I seen
Some smooth-limbed wood-nymph glance across
the green,
Or Naiad lift a head amongst the reeds.

VI. IN THE WOOD

A PLACE where Una might have fallen asleep
Assured of quiet dreams, a place to make
Sad eyes bright with strange tears; a little lake
In the green heart of a wood; the crystal deep
Of heaven so wide if there should chance to stray
Into that stainless field some thin cloud-flake,
When not a breeze the trance of noon dare break,
About the middle it must melt away.
Lilies upon the water in their leaves,
Stirr'd by faint ripples that go curving on
To little reedy coves; a stream that grieves
To the fine grasses and wild flowers around;
And we two in a golden silence bound,
Not a line read of rich *Endymion*.

VII. THE PAUSE OF EVENING

NIGHTWARD on dimmest wing in Twilight's train
The grey hours floated smoothly, lingeringly;
A solemn wonder was the western sky
Rich with the slow forsaking sunset-stain,
Barred by long violet cloud; hillside and plain
The feet of Night had touched; a wind's low sigh
Told of whole pleasure lapsed,—then rustled by
With soft subsidence in the rippling grain.
Why in dark dew, unready to depart,
Did Evening pause and ponder, nor perceive

116 FROM APRIL TO OCTOBER

Star follow star into the central blue?
What secret was the burden of her heart?
What grave, sweet memory grew she loath to
leave?
What finer sense, no morrow may renew?

VIII. IN JULY

WHY do I make no poems? Good my friend
Now is there silence through the summer woods,
In whose green depths and lawny solitudes
The light is dreaming; voicings clear ascend
Now from no hollow where glad rivulets wend,
But murmurings low of inarticulate moods,
Softer than stir of unfledged cushat broods,
Breathe, till o'erdröwsed the heavy flower-heads
bend.

Now sleep the crystal and heart-charmèd waves
Round white, sunstricken rocks the noontide long,
Or 'mid the coolness of dim lighted caves
Sway in a trance of vague deliciousness;
And I,—I am too deep in joy's excess
For the imperfect impulse of a song.

IX. IN SEPTEMBER

SPRING scarce had greener fields to show than these
Of mid September; through the still warm noon
The rivulets ripple forth a gladder tune

Than ever in the summer; from the trees
Dusk-green, and murmuring inward melodies,
No leaf drops yet; only our evenings swoon
In pallid skies more suddenly, and the moon
Finds motionless white mists out on the leas.
Dear chance it were in some rough wood-god's lair
A month hence, gazing on the last bright field,
To sink o'er-drowsed, and dream that wild-flowers
blew

Around my head and feet silently there,
Till Spring's glad choir adown the valley pealed,
And violets trembled in the morning dew.

X. IN THE WINDOW

A STILL grey evening: Autumn in the sky,
And Autumn on the hills and the sad wold;
No congregated towers of pearl and gold
In the vaporous West, no fiend limned duskily,
No angel whose reared trump must soon be loud,
Nor mountains which some pale green lake enfold
Nor islands in an ocean glacial-cold;
Hardly indeed a noticeable cloud.
Yet here I lingered, all my will asleep,
Gazing an hour with neither joy nor pain,
No noonday trance in midsummer more deep;
And wake with a vague yearning in the dim,
Blind room, my heart scarce able to restrain
The idle tears that tremble to the brim.

XI. AN AUTUMN MORNING

O WHAT a morn is this for us who knew
The large, blue, summer mornings, heaven let
down

Upon the earth for men to drink, the crown
Of perfect human living, when we grew
Great-hearted like the Gods! Come, we will strew
White ashes on our hair, nor strive to drown
In faint hymn to the year's fulfilled renown
The sterile grief which is the season's due.
Lightly above the vine-rows of rich hills
Where the brown peasant girls move amid grapes
The swallow glances; let him cry for glee!
But yon pale mist diffused 'twixt paler shapes,—
Once sovereign trees,—my spirit also fills,
And an east-wind comes moaning from the sea.

SEA VOICES

WAS it a lullaby the Sea went singing
About my feet, some old-world monotone,
Filled full of secret memories, and bringing
Not hope to sting the heart, but peace alone,
Sleep and the certitude of sleep to be
Wiser henceforth than all philosophy?

Truth! did we seek for truth with eye and brain
Through days so many and wasted with desire?
Listen, the same long gulping voice again:
Tired limbs lie slack as sands are, eyes that
tire
Close gently, close forever, twilight grey
Receives you, tenderer than the glaring day.

[He sleeps, and after an interval awakes.]

Ah terror, ah delight! A sudden cry,
Anguish, or hope, or triumph. Awake, arise,—
The winds awake! Is ocean's lullaby
This clarion-call? Her kiss, the spray that
flies
Salt to the lip and cheek? Her motion light
Of nursing breasts, this swift pursuit and flight?

O wild sea-voices! Victory and defeat,
But ever deathless passion and unrest,
White wings upon the wind and flying feet,
Disdain and wrath, a reared and hissing crest,
The imperious urge, and last, a whole life spent
In bliss of one supreme abandonment.

ABOARD THE "SEA-SWALLOW"

THE gloom of the sea-fronting cliffs
Lay on the water, violet-dark,
The pennon drooped, the sail fell in,
And slowly moved our bark.

A golden day; the summer dreamed
In heaven and on the whispering sea,
Within our hearts the summer dreamed;
The hours had ceased to be.

Then rose the girls with bonnets loosed,
And shining tresses lightly blown,
Alice and Adela, and sang
A song of Mendelssohn.

O sweet, and sad, and wildly clear,
Through summer air it sinks and swells,
Wild with a measureless desire,
And sad with all farewells.

SEA-SIGHING

THIS is the burden of the Sea,
Loss, failure, sorrows manifold;
Yet something though the voice sound free
Remains untold.

Listen! that secret sigh again
Kept very low, a whole heart's waste;
What means this inwardness of pain?
This sob repressed?

Some ancient sin, some supreme wrong,
Some huge attempt God brought to nought,
All over while the world was young,
And ne'er forgot?

Those lips, which open wide and cry,
Weak as pale flowers or trembling birds,
Are proud, and fixed immutably
Against such words.

Confession from that burdened soul
No ghostly counsellor may win;
Could such as we receive its whole
Passion and sin?

In this high presence priest or king,
Prophet or singer of the earth,
With yon cast sea-weed were a thing
Of equal worth.

IN THE MOUNTAINS

FATIGUED of heart, and owning how the world
Is strong, too strong for will of mine, my steps
Through the tall pines I led, to reach that spur
Which strikes from off the mountain toward the
West.

I hoped to lull a fretted heart to sleep,
And in the place of definite thought a sense
Possessed me, dim and sweet, of Motherhood,
The breasts of Nature, warmth, and soothing
hands,
And tender, inarticulate nursing-words
Slow uttered o'er tired eyes.

But suddenly
Rude waking! Suddenly the rocks, the trees
Stood up in rangèd power, rigid, erect,
And all cried out on me " Away with him!
Away! He is not of us, has no part
In ours or us! Traitor, away with him! "
And the birds shrilled it " Traitor," and the flowers
Stared up at me with small, hard, insolent eyes.
But I, who had been weak, was weak no more,
Nor shrank at all, but with deliberate step
Moved on, and with both hands waved off the
throng,
And feared them not, nor sent defiance back.

Thus, till the pine-glooms fell away, and goats
Went tinkling and no herd-boy near; glad airs
With sunshine in them moved angelical
Upon the solitary heights; the sky
Held not a cloud from marge to marge; and now
Westward the sun was treading, calm and free.
I lay upon the grass, and how an hour
Went past I know not. When again time was,
The sun had fallen, and congregated clouds,
A vision of great glories, held the West,
And through them, and beyond, the hyaline
Led the charm'd spirit through infinite spaces on.
I think of all the men upon this earth
The sight was mine alone; it for my soul,
My soul for it, until all seeing died.
Where did I live transfigured? through what times
Of heaven's great year? What sudden need of me
For sacrifice on altar, or for priest,
For soldier at the rampart, cup-bearer
At feasts of God, rapt singer in the joy
Of consonant praise, doom'd rebel for the fires?
—I know not, but somewhere some part I held,
Nor fail'd when summoned.

When the body took
Its guest once more the clouds were massy-grey,
The event was ended; yet a certain thing
Abode with me, which still eludes its name,
Yet lies within my heart like some great word
A mage has taught, and he who heard it once

Cannot pronounce, and never may forget.
But this I dare record,—when all was past,
And once again I turned to seek the vale,
And moved adown the slippery pine-wood path,
In the dimness every pine tree bowed to me
With duteous service, and the rocks lay couched
Like armèd followers round, and one bird sang
The song I chose, and heavy fragrance came
From unseen flowers, and all things were aware
One passed who had been called and consecrate.

" THE TOP OF A HILL CALLED *CLEAR* "

(In sight of the Celestial City)

AND all my days led on to this! the days
 Of pallid light, of springs no sun would warm,
 Of chilling rain autumnal, which decays
 High woods while veering south the quick wings
 swarm,
 The days of hot desire, of broken dreaming,
 Mechanic toil, poor pride that was but seeming,
 And bleeding feet, and sun-smit flowerless ways.

Below me spreads a sea of tranquil light,
 No blue cloud thunder-laden, but pure air
 Shot through and through with sunshine; from
 this height
 A man might cast himself in joy's despair,
 And find unhop'd, to bear him lest he fall,
 Swift succouring wings, and hands angelical,
 And circling of soft eyes, and foreheads bright.

Under me light, and light is o'er my head,
 And awful heaven and heaven to left and right;
 In all His worlds this spot unvisited
 God kept, save by the winging of keen light,
 And the dread gaze of stars, and morning's wan

Virginity, for me a living man,
Living, not borne among the enfranchised dead.

New life,—not death! No glow the senses cast
Across the spirit, no pleasure shoots o'er me
Its scattering flaw, no words may I hold fast
Here, where God's breath streams inexhaustibly;
But conquest stern is mine, a will made sane,
Life's vision wide and calm, a supreme pain,
An absolute joy; and love the first and last.

THE INITIATION

UNDER the flaming wings of cherubim

I moved toward that high altar. O, the hour!
And the light waxed intenser, and the dim

Low edges of the hills and the grey sea
Were caught and captur'd by the present Power,
My sureties and my witnesses to be.

Then the light drew me in. Ah, perfect pain!

Ah, infinite moment of accomplishment!
Thou terror of pure joy, with neither wane
Nor waxing, but long silence and sharp air
As womb-forsaking babes breathe. Hush! the
event

Let him who wrought Love's marvellous things
declare.

Shall I who fear'd not joy, fear grief at all?

I on whose mouth Life laid his sudden lips
Tremble at Death's weak kiss, and not recall
That sundering from the flesh, the flight from
time,
The judgments stern, the clear apocalypse,
The lightnings, and the Presences sublime.

How came I back to earth? I know not how,
Nor what hands led me, nor what words were
said.

Now all things are made mine,—joy, sorrow; now
I know my purpose deep, and can refrain;
I walk among the living not the dead;
My sight is purged; I love and pity men.

RENUNCIANTS

SEEMS not our breathing light?

Sound not our voices free?

Bid to Life's festal bright

No gladder guests there be.

Ah, stranger, lay aside

Cold prudence! I divine

The secret you would hide,

And you conjecture mine.

You too have temperate eyes,

Have put your heart to school,

Are proved. I recognize

A brother of the rule.

I knew it by your lip,

A something when you smiled,

Which meant "close scholarship,

A master of the guild."

Well, and how good is life,

Good to be born, have breath,

The calms good and the strife,

Good life, and perfect death.

Come, for the dancers wheel,

Join we the pleasant din,

—Comrade, it serves to feel

The sackcloth next the skin.

SPEAKERS TO GOD

First Speaker

EASTWARD I went and Westward, North and South,
And the wind blew me from deep zone to zone;
Many strong women did I love; my mouth
I gave for kisses, rose, and straight was gone.

I fought with heroes; there was joyous play
Of swords; my cities rose in every land;
Then forth I fared. O God, thou knowest, I lay
Ever within the hollow of thy hand.

Second Speaker

I am borne out to thee upon the wave,
And the land lessens; cry nor speech I hear,
Nought but the leaping waters and the brave
Pure winds commingling. O the joy, the fear!

Alone with thee; sky's rim and ocean's rim
Touch, overhead the clear immensity
Is merely God; no eyes of seraphim
Gaze in . . . O God, Thou also art the sea!

Third Speaker

Thus it shall be a lifetime,—ne'er to meet;
A trackless land divides us lone and long;
Others, who seek Him, find, run swift to greet
Their Friend, approach the bridegroom's door
with song.

I stand, nor dare affirm I see or hear;
How should I dream, when strict is my employ?
Yet if some time, far hence, thou drawest near
Shall there be any joy like to our joy?

POESIA

(To a Painter)

PAINT her with robe and girdle laid aside,
Without a jewel upon her; you must hide
By sleight of artist from the gazer's view
No whit of her fair body; calm and true
Her eyes must meet our passion, as aware
The world is beautiful, and she being fair
A part of it. She needs be no more pure
Than a dove is, nor could one well endure
More faultlessness than of a sovran rose,
Reserved, yet liberal to each breeze that blows.
Let her be all revealed, nor therefore less
A mystery of unsearchable loveliness;
There must be no discoveries to be made,
Save as a noonday sky with not a shade
Or floating cloud of Summer to the eye
Which drinks its light admits discovery.
Did common raiment hide her could we know
How hopeless were the rash attempt to throw
Sideways the veil which guards her womanhood?
Therefore her sacred vesture must elude
All mortal touch, and let her welcome well
Each comer, being still unapproachable.
Plant firm on Earth her feet, as though her own
Its harvests were, and, for she would be known
Fearless not fugitive, interpose no bar
'Twixt us and her, Love's radiant avatar,
No more to be possessed than sunsets are.

MUSICIANS

I KNOW the harps whereon the Angels play,
While in God's listening face they gaze intent,
Are these frail hearts,—yours, mine; and gently
they,

Leaning a warm breast toward the instrument,
And preluding among the tremulous wires,
First draw forth dreams of song, unfledged desires,
Nameless regrets, sweet hopes which will not stay.

But when the passionate sense of heavenly things
Possesses the musician, and his lips
Part glowing, and the shadow of his wings
Grows golden, and fire streams from finger-tips,
And he is mighty, and his heart-throbs thicken,
And quick intolerable pulses quicken,
How his hand lords it in among the strings!

Ah the keen crying of the wires! the pain
Of restless music yearning to out-break
And shed its sweetness utterly, the rain
Of heavenly laughter, threats obscure which
shake
The spirit, trampling tumults which dismay,
The fateful pause, the fiat summoning day,
The faultless flower of light which will not wane.

How wrought with you the awful lord of song?

What thirst of God hath he appeased? What
bliss

Raised to clear ecstasy? O tender and strong

The eager melodist who leaned o'er this

Live heart of mine, who leans above it now:

The stern pure eyes! the ample, radiant brow!

Pluck boldly, Master, the good strain prolong.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS

A DAY OF DEFECTION

THIS day among the days will never stand,
Carven and clear, a shape of fair delight,
With singing lips, and gaze of innocent might,
Crown'd queenwise, or the lyre within her hand,
And firm feet making conquest of a land
Heavy with fruitage; nay, from all men's sight
Drop far, cold sun, and let remorseful Night
Cloke the shamed forehead, and the bosom's
brand.

Could but the hammer rive, the thunder-stone
Flung forth from heaven on some victorious morn
Grind it to dust! Slave, must I always see
Thy beauty soil'd? Must shining days foregone
Admit thee peer, and wondering new-born
To-morrow meet thy dull eyes' infamy?

SONG AND SILENCE

WHILE Sorrow sat beside me many a day,
I,—with head turned from her, and yet aware
How her eyes' light was on my brow and hair,
The light which bites and blights our gold to grey,—
Still sang, and swift winds bore my songs away
Full of sweet sounds, as of a lute-player
Who sees fresh colours, breathes the ripe soft air,
And hears the cuckoo shout in dells of May,
Being filled with ease and indolent of heart.
So sang I, Sorrow near me: chide me not,
O Joy, for silence now! Hereafter wise,
Large song may come, life blossoming in art,
From this new fate; but leave me, thou long
 sought,
To gaze awhile into those perfect eyes.

LOVE-TOKENS

I WEAR around my forehead evermore,
The circlet of your praise, pure gold; and how
I walk forth crown'd, the approving angels know,
And see how I am meeker than before
Being thus proud. For roses my full store,
Upon a cheek where flowers will scantily blow,
Is your lips' one immortal touch, and lo!
All shame deserts my blood to the heart's core.
Dare I display love's choicest gift—this scar
Still sanguine-hued? Here ran your sudden brand
Sheer through the starting flesh, and let abroad
A traitor's life; your wrathful eyes afar,
Had doom'd him first. Ah, gracious, valiant hand
Which drew me bleeding to the feet of God!

A DREAM

I DREAMED I went to seek for her whose sight
Is sunshine to my soul; and in my dream
I found her not; then sank the latest beam
Of day in the rich west; upswam the Night
With sliding dew, and still I searched in vain,
Through thickest glooms of garden-alleys quaint,
On moonlit lawns, by glimmering lakes where
faint

The ripples brake and died, and brake again.
Then said I, " At God's inner court of light
I will beg for her; " straightway toward the same
I went, and lo! upon the altar-stair,
She knelt with face uplifted, and soft hair
Fallen upon shoulders purely gowned in white
And on her parted lips I read my name.

MICHELANGELESQUE

SHAPING thy life what if the stubborn stuff
Grudge to inform itself through each dull part
With the soul's high invention, and thy art
Seem a defeated thing, and earth rebuff
Heaven's splendour, choosing darkness,—leave
the rough

Brute-parts unhewn. Toilest thou for the mart
Or for the temple? Does the God see start
Quick beauty from the block, it is enough.
The spirit, foiled elsewhere, presses to the mouth,
Disparts the lips, lives on the lighted brow,
Fills the wide nostrils, flings the imperious chin
Out proudly. Now behold! the lyric youth,
The wrestler stooping in the act to win,
Pythian Apollo with the vengeful bow.

LIFE'S GAIN

“ Now having gained Life's gain, how hold it fast?
The harder task! because the world is still
The world, and days creep slow, and wear the will,
And Custom, gendering in the heart's blind waste,
Brings forth a wingèd mist, which with no haste
Upcircling the steep air, and charged with ill,
Blots all our shining heights adorable,
And leaves slain Faith, slain Hope, slain Love the
last.”

O shallow lore of life! He who hath won
Life's gain doth hold nought fast, who could hold
all,
Holden himself of strong, immortal Powers.
The stars accept him; for his sake the Sun
Hath sworn in heaven an oath memorial;
Around his feet stoop the obsequious Hours.

COMPENSATION

You shake your head and talk of evil days:
My friend, I learn'd ere I had told twelve years
That truth of yours,—how irrepressible tears
Surprise us, and strength fails, and pride betrays,
And sorrows lurk for us in all the ways
Of joyous living. But now to front my fears
I set a counter-truth which comes and cheers
Our after-life, when, temperate, the heart weighs
Evil with good. Do never smiles surprise
Sad lips? Did the glad violets blow last spring
In no new haunts? Or are the heavens not fair
After drench'd days of June, when all the air
Grows fragrant, and the rival thrushes sing,
Until stars gather into twilight skies?

TO A CHILD DEAD AS SOON AS BORN

A LITTLE wrath was on thy forehead, Boy,
 Being thus defeated; the resolvèd will
 Which death could not subdue, was threatening
 still

From lip and brow. I know that it was joy
 No casual misadventure might destroy
 To have lived, and fought and died. Therefore I
 kill

The pang for thee, unknown; nor count it ill
 That thou hast entered swiftly on employ
 Where Life would plant a warder keen and pure.
 I thought to see a little piteous clay
 The grave had need of, pale from light obscure
 Of embryo dreams; thy face was as the day
 Smit on by storm. Palms for my child, and bay!
 Thus far thou hast done well, true son: endure.

BROTHER DEATH

WHEN thou would'st have me go with thee, O
Death,

Over the utmost verge, to the dim place,
Practise upon me with no amorous grace
Of fawning lips, and words of delicate breath,
And curious music thy lute uttereth;
Nor think for me there must be sought-out ways
Of cloud and terror; have we many days
Sojourned together, and is this thy faith?
Nay, be there plainness 'twixt us; come to me
Even as thou art, O brother of my soul;
Hold thy hand out and I will place mine there;
I trust thy mouth's inscrutable irony,
And dare to lay my forehead where the whole
Shadow lies deep of thy purpureal hair.

THE MAGE

WHEN I shall sing my songs the world will hear,
—Which hears not these,—I shall be white with
age,

My beard on breast great as befits a mage
So skilled; but song is young, and in no drear
Tome-crammed, lamp-litten chamber shall mine
fear

To pine ascetic. Where the woods are deep,
Thick leaves for arras, in a noonday sleep
Of breeze and bloom, gaze, but my art revere!
There I will sit, and score rare wisardry
In characters vermillion, azure, gold,
With bird, starred flower, and peering dragon-fly
Limned in the lines; and secrets shall be told
Of greatest Pan, and lives of wood-nymphs shy,
Blabbed by my goat-foot servitor overbold.

WISE PASSIVENESS

THINK you I choose or that or this to sing?
I lie as patient as yon wealthy stream
Dreaming among green fields its summer dream,
Which takes whate'er the gracious hours will bring
Into its quiet bosom; not a thing
Too common, since perhaps you see it there
Who else had never seen it, though as fair
As on the world's first morn; a fluttering
Of idle butterflies; or the deft seeds
Blown from a thistle-head; a silver dove
As faultlessly; or the large, yearning eyes
Of pale Narcissus; or beside the reeds
A shepherd seeking lilies for his love,
And evermore the all-encircling skies.

THE SINGER'S PLEA

WHY do I sing? I know not why, my friend;
The ancient rivers, rivers of renown,
A royal largess to the sea roll down,
And on those liberal highways nations send
Their tributes to the world,—stored corn and wine,
Gold-dust, the wealth of pearls, and orient spar,
And myrrh, and ivory, and cinnabar,
And dyes to make a presence-chamber shine.
But in the woodlands, where the wild-flowers are,
The rivulets, they must have their innocent will
Who all the summer hours are singing still,
The birds care for them, and sometimes a star,
And should a tired child rest beside the stream
Sweet memories would slide into his dream.

THE TRESPASSER

TRESPASSERS will be prosecuted,—so
Announced the inhospitable notice-board;
But silver-clear as any lady's word
Come in, in, in, come in, now rich and low,
Now with tumultuous palpitating flow,
I swear by ring of Canace I heard.
“Sure,” said I, “this is no brown-breasted bird,
But some fair princess, lost an age ago
Through stepdame's cursed spell, till the saints
brought her
Who but myself, the knight foredoomed of grace.”
Alas! poor knight, in all that cockney place
You found no magic, save one radiant sight,
The huge, obstreperous house-keeper's grand-
daughter,
A child with eyes of pure ethereal light.

RITUALISM

THIS is high ritual and a holy day;
I think from Palestrina the wind chooses
That movement in the firs; one sits and muses
In hushed heart-vacancy made meek to pray;
Listen! the birds are choristers with gay
Clear voices infantine, and with good will
Each acolyte flower has swung his thurible,
Censing to left and right these aisles of May.
For congregation, see! real sheep most clean,
And I—what am I, worshipper or priest?
At least all these I dare absolve from sin,
Ay, dare ascend to where the splendours shine
Of yon steep mountain-altar, and the feast
Is holy, God Himself being bread and wine.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

I, WHO lie warming here by your good fire,
Was once Prometheus and elsewhere have lain;
Ah, still in dreams they come,—the sudden chain,
The swooping birds, the silence, the desire
Of pitying, powerless eyes, the night, and higher
The keen stars; (if you please I fill again
The bowl, Silenus)—; yet 'twas common pain
Their beaks' mad rooting; O, but they would tire,
And one go circling o'er the misty vast
On great, free wings, and one sit, head out-bent,
Poised for the plunge; then 'twas I crushed the cry
“ Zeus, Zeus, I kiss your feet, and learn at last
The baseness of this crude self-government
Matched with glad impulse and blind liberty.”

KING MOB

DISMISS, O sweet King Mob, your foot-lickers!
When you held court last night I too was there
To listen, and in truth well nigh despair
O'ercame me when I saw your greedy ears
Drink such gross poison. I could weep hot tears
To think how three drugged words avail to keep
A waking people still on the edge of sleep,
And lose the world a right good score of years.
I love you too, big Anarch, lately born,
Half beast, yet with a stupid heart of man,
And since I love, would God that I could warn
Work out the beast as shortly as you can,
Till which time oath of mine shall ne'er be sworn,
Nor knee be bent to you, King Caliban.

THE MODERN ELIJAH

WHAT went ye forth to see? a shaken reed?—
Ye throngers of the Parthenon last night.
Prophet, yea more than prophet, we agreed;
No John a' Desert with the girdle tight,
And locusts and wild honey for his need,
Before the dreadful day appears in sight
Urging one word to make the conscience bleed,
But an obese John Smith, "a shining light"
(Our chairman felt), "an honour to his creed."
O by the gas, when buns and tea had wrought
Upon our hearts, how grew the Future bright,—
The Press, the Institutes, Advance of Thought,
And People's Books, till every mother's son
Can prove there is a God, or there is none.

DAVID AND MICHAL

(2 SAMUEL vi. 16)

BUT then you don't mean really what you say—
To hear this from the sweetest little lips,
O'er which each pretty word daintily trips
Like small birds hopping down a garden way,
When I had given my soul full scope to play
For once before her in the Orphic style
Caught from three several volumes of Carlyle,
And undivulged before this very day!
O young men of our earnest school confess
How it is deeply, darkly tragical
To find the feminine souls we would adore
So full of sense, so versed in worldly lore,
So deaf to the Eternal Silences,
So unbelieving, so conventional.

WINDLE-STRAWS

WINDLE-STRAWS

I

UNDER grey clouds some birds will dare to sing,
No wild exultant chants, but soft and low;
Under grey clouds the young leaves seek the spring,
And lurking violets blow.

And waves make idle music on the strand,
And inland streams have lucky words to say,
And children's voices sound across the land
Although the clouds be grey.

II

ONLY maidenhood and youth,
Only eyes that are most fair,
And the pureness of a mouth,
And the grace of golden hair,
Yet beside her we grow wise,
And we breathe a finer air.

Words low-utter'd, simple-sweet,—
Yet, nor songs of morning birds,
Nor soft whisperings of the wheat
More than such clear-hearted words
Make us wait, and love, and listen,
Stir more mellow heart accords.

Only maiden-motions light,
Only smiles that sweetly go,
Girlish laughter pure and bright,
And a footfall like the snow,
What in these should make us wise?
What should bid the blossom blow?

Child! on thee God's angels wait,
'Tis their robes that wave and part,
Make this summer air elate,
Fresh and fragrant, and thou art
But a simple child indeed,
One dare cherish to the heart.

III

WERE life to last for ever, love,
We might go hand in hand,
And pause and pull the flowers that blow
In all the idle land,
And we might lie in sunny fields
And while the hours away
With fallings-out and fallings-in
For half a summer day.

But since we two must sever, love,
Since some dim hour we part,
I have no time to give thee much
But quickly take my heart,

“ For ever thine,” and “ thine my love,”—
O Death may come apace,
What more of love could life bestow,
Dearest, than this embrace.

IV

Now drops in the abyss a day of life:
I count my twelve hours' gain;—
Tired senses? vain desires? a baffled strife,
Vexed heart and beating brain?

Ten pages traversed by a languid eye?
—Nay, but one moment's space
I gazed into the soul of the blue sky;
Rare day! O day of grace!

V

SHE kissed me on the forehead,
She spoke not any word,
The silence flowed between us,
And I nor spoke nor stirred.

So hopeless for my sake it was,
So full of ruth, so sweet,
My whole heart rose and blessed her,
—Then died before her feet.

VI

NAY, more! yet more, for my lips are fain;
No cups for a babe; I ask the whole
Deep draught that a God could hardly drain,
—Wine of your soul.

Pour! for the goblet is great I bring,
Not worthless, rough with youths at strife,
And men that toil and women that sing,
—It is all my life.

VII

Look forward with those steadfast eyes
O Pilot of our star!
It sweeps through rains and driving snows,
Strong Angel, gaze afar!

Seest thou a zone of golden air?
Hearest thou the March-winds ring?
Or is thy heart prophetic yet
With stirrings of the Spring?

VIII

WORDS for my song like sighing of dim seas,
Words with no thought in them,—a piping reed,
An infant's cry, a moan low-uttered,—these
Are all the words I need.

Others have song for broad-winged winds that pass,
For stars and sun, for standing men around;
I put my mouth low down into the grass,
And whisper to the ground.

HERE END THE POEMS
WHICH WERE FIRST
PUBLISHED IN
A VOLUME
IN 1876

MISCELLANEOUS
POEMS OF LATER DATES

AT THE OAR

I DARE not lift a glance to you, yet stay
Ye Gracious Ones, still save me, hovering near;
If music live upon mine inward ear,
I know ye lean bright brow to brow, and say
Your secret things; if rippling breezes play
Cool on my cheeks, it is those robes ye wear
That wave, and shadowy fragrance of your hair
Drifted, the fierce noon fervour to allay,
Fierce fervour, ceaseless stroke, small speed, and I
Find grim contentment in the servile mood;
But should I gaze in yon untrammelled sky
Once, or behold your dewy eyes, my blood
Would madden, and I should fling with one free
cry
My body headlong in the whelming flood.

THE DIVINING ROD

HERE some time flowed my springs and sent a cry
Of joy before them up the shining air,
While morn was new, and heaven all blue and bare;
Here dipped the swallow to a tenderer sky,
And o'er my flowers lean'd some pure mystery
Of liquid eyes and golden-glimmering hair;
For which now, drouth and death, a bright despair,
Shards, choking slag, the world's dust small and
dry.

Yet turn not hence thy faithful foot, O thou,
Diviner of my buried life; pace round,
Poising the hazel-wand; believe and wait,
Listen and lean; ah, listen! even now
Stirrings and murmurings of the underground
Prelude the flash and outbreak of my fate.

SALOME

(By Henri Regnault)

FAIR sword of doom, and bright with martyr blood,
Thee Regnault saw not as mine eyes have seen;
No Judith of the Faubourg, mænad-queen,
Pale on her tumbril-throne, when the live flood
Foams through revolted Paris, unwithstood,
Is of thy kin. Blossom and bud between,
Clear-brow'd Salome, with her silk head's sheen,
Lips where a linnet might have pecked for food,
Pure curves of neck, and dimpling hand aloft,
Moved like a wave at sunrise. Herod said—
“ A boon for maiden freshness! Ask of me
What toy may please, though half my Galilee; ”
And with beseeching eyes, and bird-speech soft,
She fluted: “ Give me here John Baptist's head.”

WATERSHED

Now on life's crest we breathe the temperate air;
Turn either way; the parted paths o'erlook;
Dear, we shall never bid the Sphinx despair,
Nor read in Sibyl's book.

The blue bends o'er us; good are Night and Day;
Some blissful influence from the starry Seven
Thrilled us ere youth took wing; wherefore essay
The vain assault on heaven?

And what great Word Life's singing lips pronounce,
And what intends the sealing kiss of Death,
It skills us not; yet we accept, renounce,
And draw this tranquil breath.

Enough, one thing we know, haply anon
All truths; yet no truths better or more clear
Than that your hand holds my hand; wherefore on!
The downward pathway, Dear!

THE GUEST

RUDE is the dwelling, low the door,
No chamber this where men may feast,
I strew clean rushes on the floor,
Set wide my window to the East.

I can but set my little room
In order, then gaze forth and wait;
I know not if the Guest will come,
Who holds aloft his starry state.

MORITURUS

LORD, when my hour to part is come,
And all the powers of being sink,
When eyes are filmed, and lips are dumb,
And scarce I hang upon the brink.

Grant me but this—in that strange light
Or blind amid confused alarms,
One moment's strength to stand upright
And cast myself into Thy arms.

ALONE

THIS is the shore of God's lone love, which stirs
And heaves to some majestic tidal law;
And bright the illimitable horizons' awe;
God's love; yet all my soul cries out for hers.

FAME

My arches crumble; that bright dome I flung
Heavenward in pride decays; yet all unmoved
One column soars, and, graven in sacred tongue,
Endure the victor words—"This man was
loved."

WHERE WERT THOU?

WHERE wert Thou, Master, 'mid that rain of tears,
When grey the waste before me stretched and
wide,
And when with boundless silence ached mine ears?
“ Child, I was at thy side.”

Where wert Thou when I trod the obscure wood,
And one lone cry of sorrow was the wind,
And drop by heavy drop failed my heart's blood?
“ Before thee and behind.”

Where wert Thou when I fell and lay alone
Faithless and hopeless, yet through one dear
smart
Not loveless quite, making my empty moan?
“ Son, I was in thy heart.”

A WISH

COULD I roll off two heavy years
That lie on me like lead;
And see you past their cloudy tears,
Nor dream that you are dead.

I would not touch your lips, your hair,
Your breast, that once were mine;
Ah! not for me in Faith's despair
Love's sacramental wine.

Find you I must for only this
In some new earth or heaven,
To bare my sorry heart, and kiss
Your feet and be forgiven.

THE GIFT

“ Now I draw near : alone, apart
I stood, nor deemed I should require
Such access, till my musing heart
Suddenly kindled to desire.

No farther from Thee than Thy feet!
No less a sight than all Thy face!
Nay, touch me where the heart doth beat,
Breathe where the throbbing brain hath place.

Yield me the best, the unnamed good,
The gift which most shall prove me near,
Thy wine for drink, Thy fruit for food,
Thy tokens of the nail, the spear! ”

Such cry was mine: I lifted up
My face from treacherous speech to cease,
Daring to take the bitter cup,
But ah! Thy perfect gift was peace.

Quiet deliverance from all need,
A little space of boundless rest,
To live within the Light indeed
To lean upon the Master's breast.

RECOVERY

I JOY to know I shall rejoice again
Borne upward on the good tide of the world,
Shall mark the cowslip tossed, the fern uncurled
And hear the enraptured lark high o'er my pain,
And o'er green graves; and I shall love the wane
Of sea-charm'd sunsets with all winds upfurl'd,
And that great gale adown whose stream are
 whirl'd,
Pale autumn dreams, dead hopes, and broodings
 vain.

Nor do I fear that I shall faintlier bless
The joy of youth and maid, or the gold hair
Of a wild-hearted child; then, none the less,
Instant within my shrine, no man aware,
Feed on a living sorrow's sacredness,
And lean my forehead on this altar-stair.

IF IT MIGHT BE

If it might be, I would not have my leaves
Drop in autumnal stillness one by one,
Like these pale fluttering waifs that heap sad
sheaves
Through mere inertia trembling, tottering down.

Better one roaring day, one wrestling night,
The dark musician's fiercer harmony,
And then abandoned bareness, or the light
Of strange discovered skies, if it might be.

WINTER NOONTIDE

I go forth now, but not to fill my lap
With violets and white sorrel of the wood;
This is a winter noon; and I may hap
Upon a few dry sticks, and fire is good.

A quickening shrewdness edges the fore wind;
Some things stand clear in this dismantled hour
Which deep-leaved June had hidden; earth is
kind,
The heaven is wide, and fire shall be my flower.

THE POOL

A WOOD obscure in this man's haunt of love,
And midmost in the wood where leaves fall sere,
A pool unplumbed; no winds these waters move,
Gathered as in a vase from year to year.

And he has thought that he himself lies drowned,
Wan-faced where the pale water glimmereth,
And that the voiceless man who paces round
The brink, nor sheds a tear now, is his wraith.

THE DESIRE TO GIVE

THEY who would comfort guess not the main grief—

Not that her hand is never on my hair,
Her lips upon my brow; the time is brief
At longest, and I grow inured to bear.

All that was ever mine I have and hold;
But that I cannot give by day or night
My poor gift which was dear to her of old,
And poorly given—that loss is infinite.

A BEECH-TREE IN WINTER

Now in the frozen gloom I trace thy girth,
Broad beech, that with lit leaves upon a day
When heaven was wide and down the meadow May
Moved bride-like, touched my forehead in sweet
mirth,

And blissful secrets told of the deep Earth,
Low in mine ear; wherefore this eve I lay
My hand thus close till stirrings faint bewray
Thy piteous secrets of the days of dearth,
Silence! yet to my heart from thine has passed
Divine contentment; it is well with thee;
Still let the stars slide o'er thee whispering fate,
The might be in thee of the shouldering blast,
Still let fire-fingered snow thy tiremaid be,
Still bearing springtime in thy bosom wait.

JUDGMENT

I STAND for judgment; vain the will
To judge myself, O Lord!
I cannot sunder good from ill
With a dividing sword.

How should I know myself aright,
Who would by Thee be known?
Let me stand naked in Thy sight;
Thy doom shall be my own.

Slay in me that which would be slain!
Thy justice be my grace!
If aught survive the joy, the pain,
Still must it seek Thy face.

DÜRER'S " MELENCHOLIA "

THE bow of promise, this lost flaring star,
Terror and hope are in mid-heaven; but She,
The mighty-wing'd crown'd Lady Melancholy,
Heeds not. O to what vision'd goal afar
Does her thought bear those steadfast eyes which
are

A torch in darkness? There nor shore nor sea,
Nor ebbing Time vexes Eternity,
Where that lone thought outsoars the mortal bar.
Tools of the brain—the globe, the cube—no more
She deals with; in her hand the compass stays;
Nor those, industrious genius, of her lore
Student and scribe, thou gravest of the fays,
Expect this secret to enlarge thy store;
She moves through incommunicable ways.

MILLET'S "THE SOWER"

SON of the Earth, brave flinger of the seed,
Strider of furrows, copesmate of the morn,
Which, stirr'd with quickenings now of day unborn,
Approves the mystery of thy fruitful deed;
Thou, young in hope and old as man's first need,
Through all the hours that laugh, the hours that
 mourn,
Hold'st to one strenuous faith, by time unworn,
Sure of the miracle—that the clod will breed.
Dark is this upland, pallid still the sky,
And man, rude bondslave of the glebe, goes forth
To labour; serf, yet genius of the soil,
Great his abettors—a confederacy
Of mightiest Powers, old laws of heaven and earth,
Foresight and Faith, and ever-during Toil.

AT MULLION (CORNWALL)

Sunday

WHERE the blue dome is infinite,
And choral voices of the sea
Chaunt the high lauds, or meek, as now,
Intone their ancient litany;

Where through his ritual pomp still moves
The Sun in robe pontifical,
Whose only creed is catholic light,
Whose benediction is for all;

I enter with glad face uplift,
Asperged on brow and brain and heart;
I am confessed, absolved, illumed,
Receive my blessing and depart.

THE WINNOWER TO THE WINDS

(From Joachim de Bellay)

To yon light troop, who fly
 On wing that hurries by
 The wide world over,
 And with soft sibilance
 Bid every shadow dance
 Of the glad cover.

These violets I consign
 Lilies and sops-in-wine
 Roses, all yours,
 These roses vermeil-tinctured
 Their graces new-uncinctured
 And gilly-flowers.

So with your gentle breath
 Blow on the plain beneath
 Through my grange blow,
 What time I swink and strain,
 Winnowing my golden grain
 In noontide's glow.

EMERSON

MEMNON the Yankee! bare to every star,
But silent till one vibrant shaft of light
Strikes; then a voice thrilling, oracular,
And clear harmonies through the infinite.

SENT TO AN AMERICAN SHAKESPEARE
SOCIETY

'TWIXT us through gleam and gloom in glorious play
League-long the leonine billows ramp and roll,
The same maturing sun illumines our day,
Ripens our blood—the sun of Shakespeare's soul.

NOCTURNE

ERE sleep upheaves me on one glassy billow
To drift me down the deep,
I lie with easeful head upon my pillow,
Letting the minutes creep.

Until Time's pulse is stayed and all earth's riot
Fades in a limit white,
While over me curve fragrant wings of quiet
Tender and great as Night.

Then I gaze up. Divine, descending slumber
Thine access yet forbear,
Though vow I proffer none, nor blessings number,
Nor breathe a wordless prayer.

A Presence is within me and above me,
That takes me for its own,
A Motherhood, a bosom prompt to love me,
I know it and am known.

So softly I roll back the Spirit's portals;
O be the entrance wide!
Silence and light from home of my Immortals
Flow in, a tranquil tide.

Calming, assuaging, cleansing, freshening, freeing,
It floods each inlet deep;
Now pass thou wave of Light, ebb thought and
being!
Come thou dark wave of sleep!

THE WHIRLIGIG

GLEE at the cottage-doors to-day!
Small hearts with joy are big;
The merchant chanced to come our way
Who vends the whirligig.

You know the marvel-stick of deal,
And, where the top should taper,
Pinned lightly, the ecstatic wheel,
Flaunting its purple paper.

Raptures a halfpenny each; and see
The liberal-bosomed mother
Faltering; they tug her skirts the three,
(Ah, soon will come another!)

Away they start! Swift, swifter fly
The buzzing, whirring chips,
O eyes grown great! O gleesome cry
From daubed, cherubic lips!

I as companion of my walk
Had chosen a soul heroic
(So much I love superior talk)
An Emperor and a Stoic.

The cowslip tossed; upsoared the lark;
Our choice was to recline us
Against an elm-bole, I and Mark
Aurelius Antoninus.

Pale victory lightened on his brow,
Grieved conquest wrung from pain;
Of Nature's course he spake, and how
Man should sustain, abstain.

Physician of the soul, he spake
Of simples that allay
The blood, and how the nerves that ache
Freeze under ethic spray.

I turned; perhaps his touch of pride
Moved me, a garb he wore;
I saw those children eager-eyed,
And Rome's pale Emperor.

"You miss," I said, "born Nature's rule,
Her statutes unrepealed,
You would remove us from the school,
And from the playing-field.

And if our griefs be vain, our joys
Vainer, all's in the plan;
For what are we but gamesome boys?
Through these we grow to man.

I to my hornbook now give heed,
Now hear my playmates call,
Will ' chase the rolling circles speed,
And urge the flying ball.'

Joys, pains, hopes, fears,—a mingled heap,
Grant me, nor Prince nor prig!
I want, sad Emperor, rosy sleep,
Leave me my whirligig."

In haste I spoke; such gusty talk
Oft wrongs these lips of mine;
Under grey clouds some day I'll walk
Again with Antonine.

PARADISE LOST AND FOUND

EVE, to tell truth, was not deceived;
 The snake's word seemed to tally
 With something she herself conceived,
 Sick of her happy valley.

The place amused her for a bit,
 (Some think 'twas half a day)
 Then came, alas! a desperate fit
 Of neurasthenia.

She tired of lions bland and grand,
 She tired of thornless roses,
 She felt she could no longer stand
 Her Adam's courtly glozes.

His "graceful consort," "spouse adored,"
 His amorous-pious lectures;
 She found herself supremely bored,
 If one may risk conjectures.

"Would he but scold for once!" sighed she,
 "*De haut en bas* caressings,
 Qualified by astronomy,
 Prove scarce unmingled blessings."

She strolled; fine gentlemen in wings
 Would deftly light and stop her;
She looked demure; half-missed her "things,"
 Half feared 'twas not quite proper.

They asked for Adam, always him,
 Each affable Archangel,
Nor heeded charms of neck or limb,
 Big with their stale evangel.

They dined; her cookery instinct stirred;
 A dinner grew a dream,
Not berries cold, eternal curd,
 And everlasting cream.

Boon fruit was hers, but tame in sooth;
 One thought her soul would grapple—
To get her little ivory tooth
 Deep in some wicked apple.

So, when that sinuous cavalier
 Spired near the tree of evil,
The woman hasted to draw near;
 Such luck!—the genuine devil!

And Satan, who to man had lied,
 Man ever prone to palter,
The franker course with woman tried,
 Assured she would not falter.

He spoke of freedom and its pains,
 Of passion and its sorrow,
 Of sacrifice, and nobler gains
 Wrung from a dark to-morrow.

He did not shirk the names of death,
 Worn heart, a night of tears—
 If here the woman caught her breath,
 She dared to face her fears.

Perhaps he touched on pretty needs,
 Named frill, flounce, furbelow,
 Perhaps referred to sable weeds,
 And dignity in woe.

Glowed like two rose-leaves both ear-lobes,
 White grew her lips and set,
 The sly snake picturing small white robes,
 A roseate bassinet.

He smiled; then squarely told the curse,
 Birth-pang, a lord and master;
 She hung her head—"It might be worse,
 It seems no huge disaster."

She mused—"A sin's a sin at most;
 Life's joy outweighs my sentence;
 What of my man, who now can boast
 A virtue so portentous?

Best for him too! Sweat, workman's groan
And death which makes us even;
I want a sinner of my own,
Who finds my breast his heaven."

Our General Mother, which is true
This tale, or that old story,
Tradition's *fable convenue*
Fashioned for Jahveh's glory?

AFTER METASTASIO

IF seeking me she ask " What hap
 Befel him? Whither is he fled,
My friend, my poor unhappy friend? "
 Then softly answer " He is dead."

Yet no! May never pang so keen
 Be hers, and I the giver! Say,
If word be spoken, this alone,
 " Weeping for you he went his way."

THE CORN-CRAKE

I

HERE let the bliss of summer and her night
Be on my heart as wide and pure as heaven;
Now while o'er earth the tide of young delight
Brimms to the full, calm'd by the wizard Seven,
And their high mistress, yon enchanted Moon;
The air is faint, yet fresh as primrose buds,
And dim with weft of honey-colour'd beams,
A bride-robe for the new espousèd June,
Who lies white-limbed among her flowers, nor
dreams,
Such a divine content her being floods.

II

Awake, awake! The silence hath a voice;
Not thine, thou heart of fire, palpitating
Until all griefs change countenance and rejoice,
And all joys ache o'er-ripe since thou dost sing,
Not thine this voice of the dry meadow-lands,
Harsh iteration! note untuneable!
Which shears the breathing quiet with a blade
Of ragged edge! Say, wilt thou ne'er be still
Crier in June's high progress, whose commands
Upon no heedless drowzed heart are laid?

III

Nay, cease not till thy breast disquieted
Hath won a term of ease; the dewy grass
Trackless at morn betrays not thy swift tread,
And through smooth-closing air thy call-notes
pass,
To faint on yon soft-bosom'd pastoral steep
Thee bird the Night accepts; and I, through thee,
Reach to embalmèd hearts of summers dead,
Feel round my feet old, inland meadows deep,
And bow o'er flowers that not a leaf have shed,
Nor once have heard moan of an alien sea.

IV

Even while I muse thy halting-place doth shift,
Now nearer, now more distant—I have seen
When April, through her shining hair adrift,
Gleams a farewell, and elms are fledged with
green,
The voiceful, wandering envoy of the Spring;
Thee, never; though the mower's scythe hath
dashed
Thy nest aside, but thou hast sped askant,
Viewless; then last we lose thee, and thy wing
Brushes Nilotic maize and thou dost chaunt
Haply all night to stony ears of Pasht.

v

Ah, now an end to thy inveterate tale!

The silence melts from the mid spheres of
heaven;

Enough! before this peace has time to fail

From out my soul, or yon white cloud has driven
Up the moon's path I turn, and I will rest

Once more with summer in my heart. Farewell!

Shut are the wild-rose cups; no moth's awhirr;

My room will be moon-silvered from the west

For one more hour; thy note shall be a burr

To tease out thought and catch the slumbrous
spell.

IN THE CATHEDRAL

THE altar-lights burn low, the incense-fume
Sickens: O listen, how the priestly prayer
Runs as a fenland stream; a dim despair
Hails through their chaunt of praise, who here
inhume

A clay-cold Faith within its carven tomb.
But come thou forth into the vital air
Keen, dark, and pure! grave Night is no betrayer,
And if perchance some faint cold star illumine
Her brow of mystery, shall we walk forlorn?
An altar of the natural rock may rise
Somewhere for men who seek; there may be borne
On the night-wind authentic prophecies:
If not, let this—to breathe sane breath—suffice,
Till in yon East, mayhap, the dark be worn.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

*(Read at the Centenary Celebration, University of Virginia,
19th Jan. 1909)*

SEEKER for Eldorado, magic land,
Whose gold is beauty fine-spun, amber-clear,
O'er what Moon-mountains, down what Valley of
fear

By what love waters fringed with pallid sand,
Did thy foot falter? Say what airs have fanned
Thy fervid brow, blown from no terrene sphere,
What rustling wings, what echoes thrilled thine ear
From mighty tombs whose brazen ports expand?
Seeker, who never quite attained, yet caught,
Moulded and fashioned, as by strictest law
The rainbow'd moon-mist and the flying gleam
To mortal loveliness, for pity and awe,
To us what carven dreams thy hand has brought
Dreams with the serried logic of a dream.

DEUS ABSCONDITUS

SINCE Thou dost clothe Thyself to-day in cloud,
Lord God in heaven, and no voice low or loud
Proclaims Thee,—see, I turn me to the Earth,
Its wisdom and its sorrow and its mirth,
Thy Earth perchance, but sure my very own,
And precious to me grows the clod, the stone,
A voiceless moor's brooding monotony,
A keen star quivering through the sunset dye,
Young wrinkled beech leaves, saturate with light,
The arching wave's suspended malachite;
I turn to men, Thy sons perchance, but sure
My brethren, and no face shall be too poor
To yield me some unquestionable gain
Of wonder, laughter, loathing, pity, pain,
Some dog-like craving caught in human eyes,
Some new-waked spirit's April ecstasies;
These will not fail nor foil me; while I live
There will be actual truck in take and give,
But Thou hast foiled me; therefore undistraught,
I cease from seeking what will not be sought,
Or sought, will not be found through joy or fear,
If still Thou claimst me, seek me. I am here.

SUBLIMINAL

DOOR, little door,
Shadowed door in the innermost room of my heart,
I lean and listen, withdrawn from the stir and
apart,

For a word of the wordless love.

And still you hide,
Yourself of me, who are more than myself, within,
And I wait if perchance a whisper I may win
From my soul on the other side.

What do I catch
Afloat on the air, for something is said or done?
Are there two who speak—my soul and the name-
less One?

Little door, could I lift the latch.

Sigh for some want
Measureless sigh of desire, or a speechless prayer?
Rustle of robe of a priest at sacrifice there
Benediction or far-heard chaunt?

Could we but meet,
Myself and my hidden self in a still amaze!
But the tramp of men comes up, and the roll of
drays,

And a woman's cry from the street!

LOUISA SHORE

(*Author of "Hannibal, a Drama"*)

Who dared to pluck the sleeve of Hannibal,
And hale him from the shades? Who bade the
man,

Indomitable of brain, return to plan
A vast revenge and vowed? Wild clarions call;

Dusk faces flame; the turreted brute-wall

Moves, tramples, overwhelms; van clashes van;

Roman, Numidian, Carthaginian;

And griefs are here, unbowed, imperial.

Who caught the world's fierce tides? An English
girl.

Shy dreamer 'neath fledged elm and apple-bloom,

With Livy or Polybius on her knee,

Whose dreams were light as dew and pure as
pearl,—

Yet poignant-witted; thew'd for thought; girl-
groom

Sped to her Lord across the Midland Sea.

FLOWERS FROM THE SOUTH OF FRANCE

THANKS spoken under rainy skies,
And tossed by March winds of the North,
And faint ere they can find your eyes,
Pale thanks are mine and poor in worth,

Matched with your gift of dew and light,
Quick heart-beats of the Southern spring,
Provençal flowers, pearl-pure, blood-bright,
Which heard the Mid-sea murmuring.

Listen! a lark in Irish air,
A silver spray of ecstasy!
O wind of March blow wide and bear
This song of home as thanks for me.

Nay, but yourself find thanks more meet;
Blossoms like these which drank the sky
Strew in some shadowy alcove-seat,
And lay your violin where they lie;

Leave them; but with the first star rise,
And bring the bow, and poise at rest
The enchanted wood. Ah, shrill sweet cries!
A prisoned heart is in its breast.

TO HESTER

(At the Piano)

So ends your fingers' fine intrigue!
The netted guile! Nor yonder sat he
In pump and frill who made the gigue,
Your Neapolitan Scarlatti.

The twilight yields you to me; strange!
My dainty sprite, a most rare vision!
Well, is it not a wise exchange,
Live maid for ghost of dead musician?

Yet gently let the shadows troop
To darkness; lightly lie the dust on
Damon and Chloe, hose and hoop,
My bevy of the days Augustan.

What led my fancy down the track,
Through century-silent, shadowy mazes?
Perhaps that foolish bric-à-brac
Your pseudo-classic shelf that graces.

Or haply something I divined,
While on your face I stayed a dweller,
Of that fair ancestress—unsigned—
It pleases you to name a Kneller;
, 0

And still your fingers ran the keys,
Through quaint encounter, pretty wrangle
Light laughter, interspace of ease,
Fine turn, and softly-severed tangle,

Gigue, minuet, rondo, ritornelle—
Quaint jars with rose-leaf memories scented,
Stored with glad sound, when life went well,
Ere melancholy was invented,

When pleasure ran, a rippling tide,
And Phillida with Phyllis carolled,
Ere Werther yet for Lotte sighed,
Or English maids adored Childe Harold;

Ere music shook the central heart,
Or soared to spheral heights inhuman,
Ere Titans stormed the heaven of art,
Let by the hammer-welder, Schumann.

Ah, well, we sigh beneath the load,
We sing our pain, our pride, our passion,
And Weltschmerz is the modern mode,
But sweet seventeen is still a fashion.

Let be a while the Infinite,
Those chords with tremulous fervour laden,
Where Chopin's fire and dew unite—
I choose instead one mortal maiden.

Let sorrow rave, and sadness fret,
And all our century's ailments pester,
I am not quite despairful yet—
There, at the keyboard, sits a Hester.

UNUTTERED

SONG that is pent in me,
Song that is aching,
Ne'er to escape from me,
Sleeping or waking,

Down aspic! the dust of me,
Blown the world over
A century hence
Will envenom a lover.

His red lips grow vocal,
His great word is new,
And the world knows my secret,
Is dreaming of you.

IMITATED FROM J. SOULARY'S " LE
FOSSOYEUR "

FOR every child new-born God brings to birth
A little grave-digger, deft at his trade,
Who 'neath his master's feet still voids the earth,
There where one day the man's dark plunge is
made.

Do you know yours? Hideous perhaps is he,
You shudder seeing the workman at his task;
Such gracious looks commend who waits on me
I yield whole-hearted, nor for quarter ask.

A child rose-white, sweet-lipped, my steps he
presses
On to the pit with coaxings and caresses,
Lovelier assassin none could choose to have.
Rogue, hast thou done? Let's haste. The hour
comes quick,
Give with a kiss the last stroke of the pick,
And gently lay me in my flowery grave.

IMITATED FROM GOETHE'S " GANYMEDE "

As with splendour of morning
Around me thou flamest,
O Spring time, my lover,
With a thousand delights and desires;
To my heart comes thronging
The sacred sense
Of thy glow everlasting,
O infinite beauty!

Would I might seize thee
In these my arms!

Ah! on thy bosom
I lie sore yearning;
Thy flowers, thy grasses,
Press close to my heart;
Fresh breeze of the morn
Thy coolest the burning
Thirst of my breast.
With love the nightingale
Calls to me from the misty valley!

I come, I am coming!
Whither? Ah, whither?
Upward! Upward the urge is!
Lower the clouds come drifting,
They stoop to the longing of love.
For me! for me!

Borne in the lap of you
Upwards!
Embracing, embraced!
Upwards, even to the bosom
Of thee all-loving, my Father!

WITH A COPY OF MY " POEMS "

My slender, wondering Nautilus,
 Sunk in the ooze—a thing how frail!—
Because you choose to have it thus
Through wavering waters luminous
 Rises once more, sets up the sail;

It trembles to the sun, has fear
 Of life, that knew no fear of death:
Ah! may kind Ariel, hovering near,
 Speed the toy onward with his breath!

PROLOGUE TO MAURICE GEROTHWOHL'S
VERSION OF VIGNY'S “ CHATTERTON ”

(*March 1909*)

NOT yet to life inured, the Muse's son,
Born to be lord of visions, Chatterton,
A youth, nor yet the master of his dream,
Poor, proud, o'erwrought, perplex'd in the extreme

By poetry, his demon, and by love—
Powers of the deep below, the height above—
Ringed by a world with dreams and love at strife,
Rejects in fiery spleen the gift of life.

Condemn, but pity!

In the South, they say,
Boys in their sportive mood affect a play;
The brands aglow they fashion in a ring,
Then in the ardent cirque a scorpion fling;
Crouched motionless the creature lies, until
Urged by the fire you see him throb and thrill,
Whereon the laughter peals! Anon, he'll shape
Right on the flames his course to make escape,
And backward draws o'erpowered. Fresh shouts
of glee!

Next round the circle curving timorously
He seeks impossible exit; now, once more,

Quailing, and in the centre as before,
He shrinks despairing; lest, he knows his part,
Turns on himself, grown bold, his poisoned dart,
And on the instant dies. O then at height
We hear the cries uproarious of delight!
Doubtless the wretch on mortal crime was bent,
Doubtless the boys were good and innocent.

Play not, O world of men, the savage boy,
Make not the poet, quickener of earth's joy,
Your scorpion! Hardly once a hundred years
Compact of spirit and fire and dew, appears
He through whose song the spheral harmonies
Vibrate in mortal hearing. Nay, be wise,
For your own joy, and see he lacks not bread,
If ye but wreath the white brows of the dead,
'Tis ye yourselves are disinherited.

A SONG

WHEN did such moons upheave?
When were such pure dawns born?
Yet fly morn into eve,
Fly eve into morn.

Lily and iris blooms,
Blooms of the orchard close,
Pass—for she comes, she comes,
Your sovereign, the rose.

Lark, that is heart of the height,
Thrush, that is voice of the vale,
Cease, it is nearing, the night
Of the nightingale.

Hasten great noon that glows,
Night, when the swift stars pale,
Hasten noon of the rose,
Night of the nightingale.

THE DROPS OF NECTAR. 1789

Imitated from GOETHE'S "DIE NEKTARTROPFEN"

WHEN Minerva, granting graces
To her darling, her Prometheus,
Brought a brimming bowl of nectar
To the underworld from heaven
To rejoice his race of mortals,
And to quicken in their bosom
Of all gracious arts the impulse,
Fearing Jupiter should see her,
With a rapid foot she hastened,
And the golden bowl was shaken,
And there fell some slender sprinklings
On the verdurous plain below her.

Whereupon the bees grew busy
With the same in eager sucking.
Came the butterfly as eager
Some small drop to gather also.
Even the spider, the unshapely,
Hither crept and sucked with gusto.
Happy are they to have tasted,
They and other delicate creatures,
For they share henceforth with mortals
Art, of all earth's joys the fairest.

AMOR AS LANDSCAPE-PAINTER

Imitated from GOETHE'S "AMOR ALS LANDSCHAFTSMALER"

ON a point of rock I sat one morning,
Gazed with fixèd eyes upon the vapour,
Like a sheet of solid grey outspreading
Did it cover all in plain and mountain.

By my side meanwhile a boy had placed him,
And he spake. "Good friend, how can'st thou
calmly

Stare upon the void grey sheet before thee?
Hast thou then for painting and for modelling
All desire, it seemeth, lost for ever?"

On the child I looked, and thought in secret,
"Would the little lad then play the Master?"

"If thou wouldst be ever sad and idle,"
Spake the boy, "no thing of skill can follow.
Look! I'll paint you straight a little picture,
Teach you how to paint a pretty picture."

And thereon forth stretched he his forefinger,
Which was rosy even as a rose blossom,
To the ample canvas strained before him
Set to work at sketching with his finger.

There on high a glorious sun he painted,
 Which mine eyes with its effulgence dazzled,
 And the fringe of clouds he made it golden.
 Through the clouds he let press forth the sun-
 beams,

Then the tree-tops delicate, light, he painted,
 Late refreshed and quickened. Over the hill-
 range

Hill behind hill folded, for a background.
 Nor were waters wanting. There below them
 He the river limned, so true to Nature,
 That it seemed to sparkle in the sunbeams,
 That against its banks it seemed to murmur.

And there stood beside the river flowers,
 And their colours glowed upon the meadow,
 Gold and an enamel green and purple;
 As if all were emerald and carbuncle.
 Pure and clear above he limned the heaven,
 And the azure mountains far and further,
 So that I, new-born and all enraptured,
 Gazed on now the painter, now the picture.

“ I have given thee proof, perhaps,” so spake he,
 “ That this handicraft I’ve comprehended
 But the hardest part is yet to follow.”

Then and with his finger-tip he outlined,
 Using utmost care beside the thicket,

At the point where from earth's gleaming surface
 Was the sun cast back in all its radiance—
 Outlined there the loveliest of maidens,
 Fair of form, now clad in richest raiment,
 Brown her hair and 'neath it cheeks the freshest
 And the cheeks were of the self-same colour
 As the pretty finger that had drawn them.

" O my boy," I cried, " declare what master
 Did receive thee in his school as pupil,
 That so swiftly and so true to Nature
 Thou with skill beginn'st and well completest? "

But while yet I spake a breeze uprises.
 And behold, it sets astir the summits,
 Curleth every wave upon the river,
 Puffs the veil out of the charming maiden.
 And, what me the astonished, more astonished,
 Now the maiden's foot is put in motion,
 She advances, and to the place draws nearer,
 Where I sit beside the cunning Master.

Now when all things, all things are in motion,
 Trees and river, flowers and veil outblowing,
 And the slender foot of her the fairest,
 Think you I upon my rock stayed seated,
 Speechless as a rock and as immobile?

THE WANDERER

Imitated from GOETHE'S "DER WANDRER"

WANDERER

GOD'S grace be thine, young woman
And his, the boy who sucks
That breast of thine.
Here let me on the craggy scar,
In shade of the great elm,
My knapsack fling from me
And rest me by thy side.

WOMAN

What business urges thee
Now in the heat of day
Along this dusty path?
Bringest thou some city merchandise
Into the country round?
Thou smilest, stranger,
At this my question.

WANDERER

No city merchandise I bring,
Cool now the evening grows,

Show me the rills
Whence thou dost drink,
My good young woman.

WOMAN

Here, up the rocky path,
Go onward. Through the shrubs
The path runs by the cot
Wherein I dwell,
On to the rills
From whence I drink.

WANDERER

Traces of ordering human hands
Betwixt the underwood.
These stones *thou* hast not so disposed,
Nature—thou rich dispensatress.

WOMAN

Yet further up.

WANDERER

With moss o'erlaid, an architrave!
I recognize thee, plastic spirit,
Thou hast impressed thy seal upon the stone.

WOMAN

Further yet, stranger.

WANDERER

Lo, an inscription whereupon I tread,
But all illegible,
Worn out by wayfarers are ye,
Which should show forth your Master's piety,
Unto a thousand children's children.

WOMAN

In wonder, stranger, dost thou gaze
Upon these stones?
Up yonder round my cot
Are many such.

WANDERER

Up yonder?

WOMAN

Leftwards directly
On through the underwood,
Here!

WANDERER

Ye Muses! and ye Graces!

WOMAN

That is my cottage.

WANDERER

The fragments of a temple!

WOMAN

Here onwards on one side
The rivulet flows
From whence I drink.

WANDERER

Glowing, then hoverest
Above thy sepulchre,
Genius! Over thee
Is tumbled in a heap
Thy masterpiece,
O thou undying one!

WOMAN

Wait till I bring the vessel
That thou mayst drink.

WANDERER

Ivy hath clad around
Thy slender form divine.
How do ye upward strive
From out the wreck,
Twin columns!
And thou, the solitary sister there,
How do ye,
With sombre moss upon your sacred heads,
Gaze in majestic mourning down
Upon these scattered fragments
There at your feet,
Your kith and kin!
Where lie the shadows of the bramble bush,
Concealed by wrack and earth,
And the long grass wavers above.
Nature dost then so hold in price
Thy masterpiece's masterpiece?
Dost thou, regardless, shatter thus
Thy sanctuary?
Dost sow the thistles therein?

WOMAN

How the boy sleeps!
Wouldst thou within the cottage rest,
Stranger? Wouldst here
Rather than 'neath the open heavens bide?
Now it is cool. Here, take the boy.
Let me go draw the water.
Sleep, darling, sleep!

WANDERER

Sweet is thy rest.
How, bathed in heavenly healthiness,
Restful he breathes!
Thou, born above the relics
Of a most sacred past,
Upon thee may its spirit rest.
He whom it environeth
Will in the consciousness of power divine
Each day enjoy.
Seedling so rich expand,
The shining spring's
Resplendent ornament,
In presence of thy fellows shine,
And when the flower-sheathe fades and falls
May from thy bosom rise
The abounding fruit,
And ripening, front the sun.

WOMAN

God bless him—and ever still he sleeps.
Nought have I with this water clear
Except a piece of bread to offer thee.

WANDERER

I give thee thanks.
How gloriously all blooms around
And groweth green!

WOMAN

My husband soon
Home from the fields
Returns. Stay, stay, O man,
And eat with us thy evening bread.

WANDERER

Here do ye dwell?

WOMAN

There, between yonder walls,
The cot. My father builded it
Of brick, and of the wreckage stones.
Here do we dwell.
He gave me to a husbandman,
And in our arms he died—

Sweetheart—and hast thou slept?
How bright he is—and wants to play.
My rogue!

WANDERER

O Nature! everlastingly conceiving.
Each one thou bearest for the joy of life,
All of thy babes thou hast endowed
Lovingly with a heritage—a Name.
High on the cornice doth the swallow build,
Of what an ornament she hides
All unaware.
The caterpillar round the golden bough
Spins her a winter quarters for her young.
Thus dost thou patch in 'twixt the august
Fragments of bygone time
For needs of thine—for thy own needs
A hut. O men—
Rejoicing over graves.
Farewell, thou happy wife.

WOMAN

Thou wilt not stay?

WANDERER

God keep you safe
And bless your boy.

THE WANDERER

WOMAN

A happy wayfaring!

WANDERER

Where doth the pathway lead me
Over the mountain there?

WOMAN

To Cuma.

WANDERER

How far is it hence?

WOMAN

'Tis three good miles.

WANDERER

Farewell!
O Nature! guide my way,
The stranger's travel-track
Which over graves
Of sacred times foregone
I still pursue.

Me to some covert guide,
Sheltered against the north,
And where from noontide's glare
A poplar grove protects.
And when at eve I turn
Home to the hut,
Made golden with the sun's last beam,
Grant that such wife may welcome me,
The boy upon her arm.

IMITATED FROM GOETHE'S “ ALEXIS
AND DORA ”

AH, without stop or stay the ship still momentarily
presses
On through the foaming deep, further and further
from shore.
Far-traced the furrow is cut by the keel, and in it
the dolphins
Bounding follow as though prey were before them
in flight.
All betokens a fortunate voyage; light-hearted the
shipman
Gently handles the sail that takes on it labour for
all.
Forward as pennon and streamer presses the
voyager's spirit,
One alone by the mast stands reverted and sad.
Mountains already blue he sees departing, he sees
them
Sink in the sea, while sinks every joy from his gaze.
Also for thee has vanished the ship that bears thy
Alexis,
Robs thee, O Dora, of friend, robs thee of, ah! the
betrothed.
Thou, too, gazest in vain after me. Our hearts are
still beating
For one another, but ah! on one another no more.

Single moment wherein I have lived, thou weigh'st
in the balance

More than all days erewhile coldly squandered by
me.

Ah, in that moment alone, the last, arose in my
bosom

Life unhopèd for in thee, come down as a gift from
the Gods.

Now in vain dost thou with thy light make
glorious the æther,

Thy all-illumining day—Phœbus, by me is ab-
horred.

Back on myself I return, and fain would I there
in the silence

Live o'er again the time when daily to me she
appeared.

Was it possible beauty to see and never to feel
it?

Did not the heavenly charm work on thy dullness
of soul?

Blame not thyself, poor heart, so the poet proposes
a riddle,

Artfully wrought into words oft to the ear of the
crowd,

The network of images, lovely and strange, is a joy
to the hearer,

Yet still there lacketh the word affirming the sense
of the whole.

Is it at last disclosed, then every spirit is gladdened,

And in the verse perceives meaning of twofold
delight.

Ah, why so late, O love, dost thou unbind from
my forehead

Wrappings that darkened my eyes—why too late
dost unbind?

Long time the freighted bark delayed for favour-
ing breezes,

Fair at last rose the wind pressing off-shore to the
sea.

Idle seasons of youth and idle dreams of the
future

Ye have departed—for me only remaineth the
hour;

Yes, it remains the gladness remaining for me;
Dora, I hold thee.

Hope to my gaze presents, Dora, thy image alone.
Often on thy way to the temple I saw thee gay-
decked and decorous,

Stepped the good mother beside, all ceremonious
and grave.

Quick-footed wert thou and eager, bearing thy
fruit to the market,

Quitting the well, thy head how daringly balanced
the jar;

There, lo! thy throat was shown, thy neck more
fair than all others,

Fairer than others were shown the poise and play
of thy limbs.

Ofttime I held me in fear for the totter and crash
of the pitcher,

Yet upright ever it stood, there where the kerchief
was pleached.

Fairest neighbour, yes, my wont it was to behold
thee,

As we behold the stars, as we contemplate the moon.
In them rejoicing, while never once in the tranquil
bosom,

Even in shadow of thought stirs the desire to
possess.

Thus did ye pass, my years. But twenty paces
asunder

Our dwellings, thine and mine, nor once on thy
threshold I trod.

Now the hideous deep divides us! Ye lie to the
heavens,

Billows! your lordly blue to me is the colour of
night.

Already was everything in motion. A boy came
running

Swift to my father's house, calling me down to the
shore.

“ The sail is already hoisted; it flaps in the wind,”
so spake he.

“ Weighed with a lusty cheer the anchor parts
from the sand.

Come, Alexis! O come! ” And gravely, in token
of blessing,

Laid my good father his hand on the clustering
curls of the son.

Careful the mother reached me a bundle newly
made ready;

“ Come back happy! ” they cried. “ Come back
happy and rich.”

So out of doors, the bundle under my arm, did I
fling me,

And at the wall below, there by the garden gate,
Saw thee stand; thou smiledst upon me and
spake'st. “ Alexis,

Yonder clamouring folk, are these thy comrades
aboard?

Distant shores thou visitest now and merchandise
precious

Thou dost deal in, and jewels for the wealthy city
dames.

Wilt thou not bring me also one little light chain?
I would buy it

Thankfully. I have wished so oft to adorn me with
this.”

Holding my own I stood and asked, in the way of a
merchant,

First of the form, the weight exact, of the order
thou gavest.

Modest in truth was the price thou assignedst.
While gazing upon thee,

Neck and shoulders I saw worthy the jewels of
our queen.

Louder sounded the cry from the ship. Then
saidest thou kindly,

“ Some of the garden fruit take thou with thee on
thy way.

Take the ripest oranges—take white figs. The sea
yields

Never a fruit at all. Nor doth every country
give fruits.”

Thereon I stepped within; the fruit thou busily
broughtest,

There in the gathered robe bearing a burden all
gold.

Often I pleaded, “ see this is enough,” and ever
another

And fairer fruit down dropped, lightly touched, to
thy hand.

Then at the last to the bower thou camest. There
was a basket,

And the myrtle in bloom bent over thee, over me.
Skilfully didst thou begin to arrange the fruit and
in silence.

First the orange, that lies heavy a globe of gold,
Then the tenderer fig, which slightest pressure will
injure,

And with myrtle o’erlaid, fair adorned was the
gift.

But I lifted it not. I stood, we looked one another
Full in the eyes. When straight the sight of my
eyes waxed dim.

Thy bosom I felt on my own! and now my arm
encircled

The stately neck, whereon thousandfold kisses I
showered.

Sank thy head on my shoulder—by tender arms
enfolded

As with a chain was he the man whom thou hast
made blest.

The hands of Love I felt, he drew us with might
together,

And thrice from a cloudless sky it thundered; and
now there flowed

Tears from my eyes, down streaming, weeping wert
thou. I wept,

And through sorrow and joy the world seemed to
pass from our sense.

Ever more urgent their shoreward cry; but thither
to bear me

My feet refused: I cried, " Dora, and art thou not
mine? "

" For ever," thou gently saidst. And thereon it
seemed that our tears,

As by some breath divine, gently were blown from
our eyes.

Nearer the cry " Alexis! " Then peered the boy,
as he sought me,

In through the garden gate. How the basket he
eyed.

How he constrained me. How I pressed thee once
more by the hand.

How arrived I aboard? I know as one drunken I
seemed.

Even so my companions took me to be; they bore
with one ailing,

And already in haze of distance the city grew dim.

" For ever," Dora, thy whisper was. In my ear it
echoes

Even with the thunder of Zeus. There stood she
by his throne,

She, his daughter, the Goddess of Love, and beside
her the Graces.

So by the Gods confirmed this our union abides.

O then haste thee, our bark, with the favouring
winds behind thee.

Labour, thou lusty keel, sunder the foaming flood!

Bring me to that strange haven; that so for me
may the goldsmith

In his workshop anon fashion the heavenly pledge.

Ay, in truth, the chainlet shall grow to a chain, O
Dora.

Nine times loosely wound shall it encircle thy neck.

Further, jewels most manifold will I procure for
thee; golden

Bracelets also. My gifts richly shall deck thy
hand.

There shall the ruby contend with the emerald;
loveliest sapphire

Matched against jacinth shall stand, while with a
setting of gold

Every gem may be held in a perfect union of
beauty.

O what joy for the lover to grace with jewel and
gold the beloved.

If pearls I view, my thought is of thee; there rises
before me

With every ring the shape slender and fair of thy
hand.

I will barter and buy, and out of them all the fairest
Thou shalt choose. I devote all my lading to thee.
But not jewel and gem alone shall thy lover pro-
cure thee.

What a housewife would choose, that will he
bring with him too.

Coverlets delicate, woollen and purple, hemmed
to make ready

A couch that grateful and soft fondly shall welcome
the pair.

Lengths of the finest linen. Thou sittest and
sewest and clothest

Me therein and thyself, and haply also a third.

Visions of hope delude my heart. Allay, O Divine
Ones,

Flames of resistless desire wildly at work in my
breast,

And yet I fain would recall delights that are
bitter,

When care to me draws near, hideous, cold and
unmoved.

Not the Erinnyes torch nor the baying of hounds
infernial

Strikes such terror in him, the culprit in realms of
despair,

As that phantom unmoved in me who shows me
the fair one

Far away. Open stands even now the garden gate,
And another, not I, draws near—for him fruits are
falling,

And for him, too, the fig strengthening honey
retains.

Him too doth she draw to the bower. Does he
follow? O sightless

Make me, O Gods! destroy the vision of memory
in me.

Yes—a maiden is she—she who gives herself
straight to one lover,

She to another who woes as speedily turns her
around.

Laugh not, O Zeus, this time, at an oath auda-
ciously broken—

Thunder more fiercely! strike! yet hold back thy
lightning shaft.

Send on my trace the sagging clouds. In gloom
as of night-time

Let thy bright lightning-flash strike this ill-fated
mast.

Scatter the planks around and give to the raging
waters

This my merchandise. Give me to the dolphins
a prey.

Now ye Muses enough! In vain is your effort to
image

How in a heart that loves alternate sorrow and
joy.

Nor are ye able to heal those wounds which Love
has inflicted,

Yet their assuagement comes, Gracious Ones, only
from you.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The four Goethe translations with which this volume closes are taken from rough jottings, hardly more than *protoplasm*.

They much need re-handling, which they cannot now receive. Many lines are, as verse, defective for the ear . . . yet some contain sufficient beauty, as well as fidelity, in translation to justify, perhaps, their preservation as fragments of unfinished work.

This does not apply to the other translations which were left by E. D. in fair MS. as completed.

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